



Backwoods Home magazine

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practical ideas for self reliant living

Special food issue

***A Civil War Christmas dinner
Canning meat and vegetables
Growing lettuce in winter
Long-term food storage
Brewing holiday beers
Victory Gardens***

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Note from the publisher

First back-to-Oregon edition

This is our first edition produced after having moved the magazine back into the state of Oregon. Please note our new address: P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. Our 800 number is the same: (800) 835-2418. Our regular office number has changed to: 1-541-247-8900. Our FAX has changed to: 1-541-247-8600.

It's great to be back in Oregon, next to the Pacific ocean, although I still love northern California. I've spent nearly all of my life close to an ocean, first in Boston for nearly 30 years where I could generally walk to Boston Harbor and do some fishing, and since then on the Pacific, mainly in southern California, and now in southern Oregon. I am a salt water fisherman at heart and am well acquainted with places like Quincy Bay and Cape Cod on the Atlantic, and I can usually name the fish I am catching long before I've reeled it up from the ocean floor. Out here on the Pacific I'm less familiar with the types of fish, but I'm an eager learner.

I often refer to the oceans as part of my psychic space. Just as it has always been more comfortable for me to live in a house with tall ceilings, or to be any place where there is a lot of space around me, having the ability to daily drive to work alongside the Pacific Ocean is both relaxing and energizing. Our new home is on a 1500-foot hill above the Pacific, and as I walk on my acreage and look down at the ocean I tend to step back in time and imagine that my exhilaration is shared by my Irish grandparents—and my mother before she emigrated to the United States—as they walked above their part of the Atlantic off the southern Irish coast many years ago.

The new office is located off Highway 101 in downtown Gold Beach, a breezy coastal town of about 2,000 people. Because it's located on a beautifully rugged coast with miles of sandy beaches, it's a tourist area in the summer with lots of RVs going by, but otherwise it's a relatively calm area with mild weather year-round. If you're in this area, feel free to drop by for a visit, but bring a beer for me, John, and MacDougal.

Riding the Y2K wave

Even though I have written an editorial saying all the fuss over the Y2K—or Millennium Bug—problem is more hysteria than reality, this magazine continues to benefit from the concern. Book writers and newsletter publishers, who forecast horrific Y2K scenarios at the onset of the new millennium, continue to recommend people buy this magazine so they can be prepared for whatever eventuality develops. Even Gary North, perhaps the most widely read of the Y2K forecasters (garynorth.com on the Internet) recommends us.



Dave Duffy

Which just goes to show that commonsense preparedness of the nature that we recommend, namely, always be prepared to take care of yourself and your family, always rely on yourself and no one else, and always make self-reliance the dominant philosophical theme of your life, is simply a very good idea, no matter what's around the next corner.

Whether civilization as we know it is about to hit a big bump in the road, or whether it's going to continue its haphazard journey down the road, the articles in this magazine will be useful and are being used everyday by the readers and writers alike. They are all based on science and practicality, all the result of people trying to become as self-reliant as possible, which is consistent with this great American way of life of ours. If Thomas Jefferson were sitting with me today and reading over back issues of this magazine, he'd be nodding his head approvingly. This magazine, and the people who write and read it, are self reliance in action.

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It's a nice gift for your friends, a nice gift for yourself, and a nice way to boost our subscriber base. We'll do our part by keeping the solid self-reliance information coming, whether or not the Millennium Bug brings chaos and catastrophe with the new year.

By the way, our next issue is all about commonsense preparation for—you guessed it—the Millennium Bug. Δ

My view

Do we need more democracy?

On Tuesday, November 3, 1998, all of the House, one third of the Senate, 38 governorships, and an assortment of state legislators, judges, mayors, and dog catchers will be up for election, their fates determined by the voters.

As in every election year, there's a hue and cry to get the voters out—all of 'em: old and young, black and white, men and women, rich and poor... The more voters, the more democracy. It's the American way. Who'd be crazy enough to question it?

Why, just the other day I heard President Clinton speak of one or another of those Third World countries where leadership changes are frequent, violent, and usually in off-election years. He said what we need to do is bring them more democracy. And now that we police the world, democracy has become our chief export. It's America's solution to what ails humanity. Only a fool would question it. So, naturally, I will: "Do we really need more democracy?" No!

For starters, we already have people voting who are functionally illiterate, who don't know the Constitution from a cow pie. No one has explained to me how getting even more of them to vote is going to make this world a better place to live.

Still, we Americans put great stock in democracy. According to literature produced by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which is given to every applicant for American citizenship, the most important thing about being an American is the right to vote. But, trust me, it's not. The most important thing about being an American is our Bill of Rights.

Consider this: many people don't ever vote, yet their lives are little different than their voting neighbors. And foreigners in this country make out pretty well without even being allowed to vote. Why? Because in this country they're guaranteed protection by the same Bill of Rights that protects you and me, just because they're members of that exclusive club, *homo sapiens*. The Founding Fathers never said you had to be an American to benefit from constitutional protections. They believed "our" rights belong to everyone.

So I might never vote for the rest of my life, yet I will be just fine—just so long as no one ever tramples on my freedoms. And the funny part is, democracy is no guarantor of those freedoms, for as Claire Wolfe points out in her book, *101 Things to Do 'til the Revolution*, today's most oppressive countries are almost all democracies. Scary, huh?

Democracy can be dangerous. Among the failures of the ancient Greek civilization were its democratic excesses.

Socrates drank the hemlock that killed him because the Greeks felt democracy outweighed individual freedoms, and the mob decreed the death penalty because he exercised what we call free speech. And later, when the Roman electorate discovered they could vote themselves bread and circuses, then send the bill to someone else, their country also headed for the cesspool of civilizations.

So, what we really need is not more democracy, but restrictions on democracy. People have got to understand that just because 51 percent of them have strong feelings about something, it doesn't mean they can force that belief on everyone else. Nor can we vote away another's basic rights, as the Greeks did, or create new ones for ourselves, particularly if you expect your fellow citizens to bankroll them for you, as they did in Rome.

Our Founding Fathers understood this and it was part of their thinking as they adopted our Bill of Rights.

Today, I listen to campaign promises. Candidates garner votes in our democratic elections by promising new "rights" our forefathers never thought of. Among them, the right to work, right to housing, right to food, etc. But there's a difference between those rights and the rights conceived by our forefathers. Rights listed in the Bill of Rights, as well as others implied by the Ninth Amendment, we are born with. They are neither earned nor bestowed, do not cost someone money, nor are they taken from someone else.

However, the new rights we hear about today must be supplied by someone else. Cash must be taken—some say, extorted—from your fellow citizens, under the threat of property confiscation, imprisonment, and even death so we can pay for them. Don't believe me? Try not paying your taxes. Worse yet, our electorate today believes it can deny others their property rights in the name of the environment, deny their right to free speech with election campaign laws, deny their right to treat their own bodies as they wish with drug laws, helmet laws, sex laws, etc.

But ask yourself: Can you vote someone else's rights away? If we repeal the First Amendment, which states we have the right to free speech, a free press, and the freedom of religion, etc., would those rights be gone? Our Founding Fathers didn't think so. According to them our rights are not bestowed by the government so they can't take them away, either. Governments can only deny you the opportunity to exercise your rights. It's called dictatorship. This is true even when the electorate does it.

So what we need, rather than more democracy, are to observe the restrictions on democracy. We need voters who understand we cannot vote away each other's basic rights and freedoms nor create new ones for ourselves and demand our fellow citizens finance them for us. We can only do this by understanding, each time we step into the polling booth, where the limits on democracy are and that when we carry democracy to an extreme it becomes tyranny. Δ

— John Silveira

Get a jump on homesteading with a recreational vehicle

By Judy Wogoman

When setting up a homestead, which takes priority? Refrigeration? Light? Water? Drainage? Shelter? And for that matter, where should the homestead be? Do we want to build in the valley or atop the hill?

It would be nice to have an “instant homestead” that we could try in different spots, that would have a few of the comforts of home, and that might help get us started when we find that perfect place.

It happens that a self-contained recreational vehicle (RV) can do all these things while serving as a stepping-stone to self-sufficiency in three ways.

- It is useful in exploring different homestead sites.
- The RV is relatively complete, eliminating the which-urgent-project-do-I-do-first dilemma.
- The RV can provide a stopgap for many of the necessities—refrigeration, light, shelter, etc.—while you set up your homestead, instantly and at low cost.

Choosing a location

If you haven’t narrowed your search area yet, choosing a location for your

homestead can be an expensive and frustrating task. All Chambers of Commerce describe the business climate as “great.” All realtors have “perfect” homesites. And almost all motel desk clerks know absolutely nothing about zoning, laws, financing

the Chamber of Commerce or realtor won’t tell you. (Property taxes going up 40% next year? New building ordinance prohibits owner-built homes? Phone system just one step above two tin cans and a string?)

Found a promising site? With a self-contained RV you may be able to convince the seller to let you spend a day on the site. You may find, like our family did, that the lovely pond was the neighbor-up-the-road’s sewage disposal, and that the peaceful serenity

of 15 acres of rolling, wooded land, was punctuated at all hours of the day and night by the shouting offspring and revving race car of said neighbor. Perhaps a few trips around the curves or up the hill will convince you to hold “accessibility” in higher regard on your wish list.

Once the homesite is located, the fun begins. The view from the west ridge is nice—except between 7 and 9, when the sun is blinding. The little brook is peaceful and soothing as long as upstream thunderstorms don’t turn it into a ravenous river. The site on the ridge may mean a steep, uphill driveway. The bridge that will cross the brook 10 months out of

the year may be 3 feet under water during spring thaws. By homesteading on various spots on your acreage you can also find the prettiest spot and determine how to make it even better. Otherwise, you may find you’ve started building a permanent home on the wrong spot, and your time, money, and effort will have been wasted. By using the RV as a temporary homestead, you can avoid some of these problems. Park it here for a few days, there for a few. Try out each possibility before it’s cast in stone (or concrete).



options, building permits, or septic systems. Not to mention the fact that your motel neighbors are either clandestine lovers or weary travelers interested only in a few zzzzs between point A and point B. And even the cheapest motel costs at least twice as much as the average RV campground.

Campgrounds, on the other hand, are full of friendly people who are often willing to chat. On weekends, more than half are usually local people. You can often get leads on property for sale, and other valuable information

Developing the site

Theoretically, your highest priority should claim your attention, your finances your focus. So, what is first priority? Refrigeration? Water? Drainage? Shelter? Heat? Light? And if you can decide which one is of over-riding importance, which system(s) do you want? Icebox? Root cellar? Spring house? Well? Spring? Cistern? Solar? Wind? Water?

The big problem is that these are all priority one. Most of them can't be put off for long, and many of the alternative systems are expensive. (Priced a kerosene refrigerator lately?) It takes time and money to properly set up a homestead and both are often in short supply in the early months. It takes time to decide which option is best.

The RV stepping stone allows you time to decide among the options and time to build the systems right.

Finally, the RV provides a level of comfort that can be valuable in keeping you motivated. While you probably won't need an RV satellite dish or microwave oven, a hot bath and comfortable bed are priceless after a day of digging, planting, chopping, hauling, etc. You can live on peanut butter and crackers, but a hot meal cooked on a bottle-gas stove is a whole lot tastier.

Which RV for me?

There are three basic types of self-contained RVs: pickup campers, travel trailers, and motor homes. Each has advantages and disadvantages. (I am not including pop-up tent campers because they don't offer the same self-contained features of the others.)

Pickup campers range from 8-foot models that slide into the bed of a pickup truck to huge fifth-wheel rigs. The smaller slide-ins are the most economical. Used slide-ins can often be found for under \$500. (I've seen two 8-foot models that sold for under \$150, and the 10-foot model I have now was \$250.) Fifth-wheels are a lot

more expensive. A used 25-footer the same vintage as my slide-in was priced at \$2500. The fifth-wheels are roomier, of course but slide-ins have certain other advantages. For example, if you don't already have a truck, you're going to need a truck for the homestead anyway. The same features that are good for hauling campers (heavy-duty suspension, radiator, and transmission coolers, etc.) will be helpful when you start hauling lumber, concrete blocks, and other building materials. The camper can be loaded onto the truck in a matter of minutes without losing maneuverability.

Slide-in campers provide only the basics: the bathrooms are small with showers, not bathtubs. Some have iceboxes instead of refrigerators. You will want a three-way refrigerator (bottle-gas, 12-volt electric, and 110-volt electric).

Travel trailers are the midrange alternative. They come in a wide range of sizes and styles and have the most storage space of the three RV types. Used models are priced from \$1000 to \$5000 depending on age and amenities. Many trailers are roomy inside, and some even have full baths complete with bathtub. Like the pickup camper, the trailer can be separated from the tow vehicle. With practice, the trailer can be hitched and unhitched fairly quickly. However, pulling a trailer is more difficult than simply driving with a camper down the road. Turning and backing are two areas where practice is essential.

The third type of RV is the motorhome. Even used, motorhomes are expensive to buy, operate, and maintain. Used motorhomes start at about \$3000 and are subject to the same drawbacks as a used car. They offer the least amount of storage space. And if there is a problem with either the RV systems or the drive components, the entire unit has to go in the shop.

My personal recommendation—and the setup our family uses—is a combi-

nation. We have a one-ton pickup, a ten-foot slide-in camper, and a 22-foot travel trailer. For short weekend trips the pickup camper is quick and easy to use. For longer trips, the added trailer provides additional comfort, as well as privacy for parents and children.

If you'd like to try before you buy, many RV dealers offer rentals. Rates and terms vary, so call several local dealers before renting.

Important checkpoints

When inspecting a used unit, there are three important checks you should make before you let yourself fall in love with the floor plan, the cute storage spaces, or the decor. If the unit fails any one of the three, keep shopping. These problems are the most difficult to fix and among the most critical. If the unit passes the three tests, then look at the other details too.

1. Check ceiling for evidence of leaks, especially around air conditioner or vent opening.
2. Poke your finger around window corners, inside. If paneling is "soft" it indicates a leak.
3. Check the refrigerator. The design of RV refrigerators, especially older models, sometimes leads to a wide range of dependability—or the lack thereof. Some models won't work if they aren't perfectly level in all directions. Others would probably work teetering at the peak of Mt. Everest.

Homesteading is a challenge, whether starting from scratch or reclaiming a rural fixer-upper. A self-contained RV can provide us an "instant homestead" before we make the actual move, making the move itself smoother and less stressful on both our nerves and our finances. Δ

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Dreaming of a Civil War Christmas dinner

By Larry Cywin

As anyone who has served in the military can tell you, home cooked meals are almost always superior to military rations. It was never more certain than during the Civil War.

The usual ration on both sides was bread of some sort, a little meat (salt pork or beef), dried beans, and coffee. Coffee was important to the soldiers. They would go for days without food if they got their coffee. The bread ration had to be something that traveled well. Cornmeal was popular on both sides, but wheat flour was often hard to find. The worst bread though was in the form of biscuits called hardtack. Usually it was too hard to bite into, and often, it was wormy, though some soldiers claimed that wormholes made the stuff easier to chew. It was soaked in water or broth to soften it up.

Christmas was the premier American holiday in the 1800s. Even if no other day was celebrated in the year,

Christmas was. It was a time of feasting and merriment and joining with friends and family for the round of social events. Of course the soldiers in the field, with their meager, low-quality rations, missed the celebrations back home.

These were the dishes that the soldiers longed for in the field. They would think about the pleasures of home so far away, while consuming their soup and bread. Some did not even have bread, and their soup was nothing more than dry beans boiled in water. Let's step back in time and dream with these Civil War soldiers.

Roast turkey with oyster sauce

The usual main dish of Christmas dinner during the Civil War was a roast turkey. However, it was often cooked without stuffing and served with oyster sauce. Oysters were common and popular fare during the war. They traveled well and were cheap. They were also quite tasty and made a nice departure from the more common gravy.



1 turkey
butter
a dozen oysters, shucked
1½ cups of milk
4 tablespoons of butter
½ cup of flour
salt
pepper
1 Tbsp. mixed herbs (sage, rosemary, parsley)

Method:

1. Cover the turkey with aluminum foil and roast at 350° F for 20 minutes per pound plus 20 minutes.
2. About 20 minutes before the bird is done, remove the foil and brush the skin with butter. Return the bird to the oven to finish cooking.
3. Strain the oysters, reserving the juice. Set the oysters aside.
4. Mix the oyster juice with the milk.
5. Melt the butter in a pan, remove from heat, and stir in the flour.
6. Return the pan to the heat and add the butter-flour mixture slowly while stirring constantly.
7. Cook the sauce until thickened.
8. When the turkey is ready to serve, add the oysters and seasonings to the sauce. Simmer just enough to heat the oysters.
9. Serve the sauce on the side.

Vegetables

A number of vegetables were commonly used during this period. Naturally, most of them were ones that stored well. This includes roots such as carrots, parsnips, turnips, rutabagas, potatoes, and squash. Cabbage, in the form of sauerkraut, was also quite popular.

The roots were cooked simply. They were peeled and cut into chunks and simmered until tender. They were served with butter or possibly a dash of vinegar.

Sweet potato pudding

Potatoes were served baked, boiled, mashed, or fried just like they are today. Sweet potatoes were well liked, and lent themselves to some interesting variations such as sweet potato pudding.

6 medium sweet potatoes
1 cup of milk
1 cup of sugar
3 eggs
1 Tbsp. of lemon juice
1 tsp. of cinnamon

Method:

1. Peel the potatoes and boil until tender.
2. Mash potatoes with the milk until smooth.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and beat until well mixed.
4. Pour into shallow, lightly greased dish. Bake at 375° F for 30 minutes.

Squash

Winter squash saw quite a lot of use. It was easy to prepare and easy to store. It was either baked or boiled until tender. In either case, cooked squash could be served as is or seasoned with salt, pepper, nutmeg, brown sugar, maple syrup, or butter.

An excellent squash dish was made by browning pork or bacon in a pan. Cooked squash was mashed and mixed with the meat and drippings. This mixture was heated thoroughly and served with salt and pepper.

Corn bread

Bread was essential to any meal, and it ran the gamut from plain corn bread to sweet yeast dough like Sally Lunn to various flavored loaves.

Corn bread could be anything from cornmeal, water, and salt (johnny cakes) to spoon bread (so rich in eggs and milk that it was eaten with a spoon). A middle of the spectrum type was something like the next recipe.

½ cup cornmeal
1 cup flour
pinch of salt
4 eggs
2 Tbsp. milk
3 Tbsp. butter

Method:

1. Combine the dry ingredients in a bowl.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well.
3. Pour the batter into a greased 9x9-inch pan and bake at 375° F for 15 to 20 minutes.

Sally Lunn

The richer Sally Lunn was from England and it was quite popular as a bread for celebrations.

1 cup of milk
2 Tbsp. of shortening
½ ounce of active dry yeast
3 cups of flour
½ tsp. of salt
1 egg
1 Tbsp. of sugar

Method:

1. Combine milk and shortening and heat to scalding. Remove from heat and let cool.
2. Pour milk mixture into a bowl. Add the remaining ingredients and mix until smooth.
3. Cover the bowl with a towel and let the dough rise for 60 to 90 minutes.
4. Punch down the dough and put in greased loaf pan. Let rise for another hour.
5. Bake at 375° F for approximately 45 minutes.

Pumpkin bread

Pumpkins were a common crop. Not only did they keep well but they could be used as food for livestock as well as people. Besides the traditional pumpkin pies, they were served as vegetables, in sweet dishes similar to the sweet potato pudding above, and in this pumpkin bread recipe.

2 eggs
1 cup of cooked, mashed pumpkin
2 cups of flour
¾ cups of sugar
½ tsp. grated nutmeg

Method:

1. Mix eggs and pumpkin.
2. Mix remaining ingredients into pumpkin mix.
3. Mix well, pour into a buttered loaf pan.
4. Bake at 350° F for one hour.

Eggnog

One of the favorite holiday drinks during the Civil War was eggnog. Unlike the commercial varieties sold today, eggnog was made with real eggs and always had whiskey, brandy, or rum in it. This is a traditional recipe.

4 egg yolks
4 Tbsp. of sugar
1 cup of heavy or whipping cream
1 cup of brandy (or whiskey or rum)
¼ cup wine
4 egg whites
grated nutmeg or cinnamon

Method:

1. Beat the egg yolks until light in color.
2. Slowly beat in the sugar, cream, brandy, and wine.
3. Whip the egg white separately.
4. Fold the egg whites into the other ingredients.
5. Sprinkle with spices and serve. Δ

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Canning your meats and vegetables at home — it's not only easy, it's safe and inexpensive

By Jackie Clay

While quite a few people still put up pickles, jams, jellies, and tomatoes, it is estimated that less than 5% of the population in the United States actively cans vegetables, meat, fish, and poultry. Why? I think it's because people fear it is difficult, dangerous, and expensive. They're afraid they will give their families food poisoning, and they think they can buy canned goods cheaper at the store.

Let's look at the arguments realistically. Difficult? I can put up 10 pounds of meat in less than 2 hours, while I work on the word processor or home school our son, and I'm no rocket scientist.

Dangerous? No, the canner won't blow up if you read common sense directions and regularly monitor the pressure, adjusting the heat as needed to keep it at the correct pressure. Nor do you have to worry about tainted food if you follow the precautions given in a canning book.

Expensive? If it was, this frugal home canner sure wouldn't do it. On an average, it costs me 10¢ to can a jar of vegetables and meat (provided I grow the produce and hunt or home raise the meat) and even less if I can on our wood range, which I often do during the cool mornings of autumn.

And that jar can be anywhere from a half-pint to a half-gallon of food. Store-bought canned vegetables and meat cost a lot more than that. Just yesterday I priced eight ounces of canned chicken breast, on sale, at \$2.19. That translates to \$4.38 a pint vs. 10¢ for a pint of my home-canned chicken. And even if I bought the chicken from a butcher, then canned it, I could put up a pint for half the

cost of that store-bought canned meat. And besides the reduced cost, there are no chemical additives in anything I can.

To successfully can, all you need are some basic equipment and instructions and you can enjoy clean, chemical-free, inexpensive, and nutritious vegetables and meat all year long.

process meat and vegetables in other than brand-name canning jars and that if you use pickle, mayonnaise, salad dressing, or other jars, which a canning lid and ring will fit well, they will break in the pressure canner. Not so. I've used these "orphan" jars for over 35 years, along with Mason and Kerr jars. I can see absolutely no dif-



Canning tools: good canning book, jar lifter, rings, lids, funnel, and jar. A pressure canner is also necessary.

Equipment

A good **canning book** is a must for all home canners. I have four, not because canning is difficult or that I am stupid, but because each provides a lot of different recipes and ideas. The processing and safety tips in each book are the same, but I'm always open to new ideas and you should be too. But until you become experienced you should not free-lance, that is, change the recipes, as incomplete processing times can result.

Jars are a must, of course. Some folks will swear that you cannot

ference in the instance of breakage. So a note on a bulletin board or in a free shopper, or just plain telling everyone you know, will usually result in a lot of free jars.

Examine each jar as you wash it at home for any minute chips or cracks, especially in the rim of the glass. Chips will usually result in the jar not sealing or a larger crack developing. And cracks, of course, weaken the jar and cause it to break as it processes.

A **pressure canner** is necessary to can all meat, fish, poultry, and meat products such as soups, stews, spaghetti sauces, etc. This is a fairly



Two days' canning yields beets, elk meat, green beans, potatoes, chili, and corn.

large expense for many frugal folks, costing about \$125 for the larger, more work-worthy size. But, when you figure it will last for over 20 years, without maintenance, it is one of the best buys of a lifetime. Remember, you can use it to put up nearly anything that you would see on a store shelf or that you may hunt or fish for yourself.

Vegetables and meat products must be processed in a pressure canner to raise the temperature of the product you are processing and hold it at that level for for a considerable time. This ensures that you will kill all the bacteria.

Water not under pressure, as is used in simple water-bath processing, boils at 212° F. This is fine when canning fruits and tomatoes which have high acid content that kills microbes that may survive the boiling. But it is not adequate for low-acid vegetables and meats. Still, it was the method used by our grandmothers, as they did not have pressure canners as young women. And the food they canned did seal and was usually okay to eat.

Usually. But I won't gamble my family's lives on "usually." Food poisoning is nothing to fool with, so I, and all intelligent home canners, process all meat and vegetable products in a pressure canner.

Jar rings (sometimes called bands) and lids are a basic, as well. Jar rings are used to hold the lid in place during processing. They *do not* help keep the jar sealed during storage. A properly sealed jar will remain sealed, without its ring, even when handled. In fact, jars should *not* be stored with rings on them as dampness can collect under the rings and promote rusting, making the ring useless for further use, and the jar lid may rust too, which will ultimately cause the seal to fail and the food to spoil.

Jar lids need to be of high quality. Never use el-cheepo lids from Asia that you've never heard of before. The three most dependable brands are Mason, Kerr, and Bernardin. The lids are boxed a dozen to a box, and they consist of a disk of lightweight metal, rimmed with a rubberized compound which, under heat, effectively seals the jar. They are *not* reusable and should be discarded after one use. Boxes of lids will store for years, remaining good. Self-reliant people should stock up on jar lids.

Other handy equipment to have around are a **canning funnel, sharp knives, mixing bowls, a jar lifter, chopping board, and a lid lifter** which neatly picks individual jar lids out of a pan of boiling water.

Canning steps for vegetables and meat

1. Have all the equipment on hand and ready.
2. Inspect the jar rims again for nicks.
3. Fill the jars.
4. Wipe off the jar rim.

5. Put the lid into place.
6. Screw the ring on firmly, but not forcefully.
7. Place the jar into canner.
8. Put the canner lid on, securing it firmly, but leaving the exhaust vent open.
9. When a steady stream of forceful steam comes from the vent, close it off.
10. Wait for the pressure to build to correct readings, then begin counting the processing time.
11. When time is up, shut off the heat, then allow pressure to drop to zero.
12. Remove the canner's lid away from yourself, so steam does not scald you, and remove the jars.
13. Set jars on dry, folded towels away from drafts until they cool.
14. Examine for seal using one finger to press on center of the lid. If it gives, it is not sealed and you must reprocess it using a new lid.
15. Remove the rings, wash the jars, and store them in cool, dark, dry place.

While many foods are most easily canned using the hot pack method (where partially or wholly cooked food is placed in hot jars, then pres-



Asparagus, ready to can.

sure canned), most foods I can are placed in the jars cold for ease and speed of processing a batch. Read your canning book, then decide which method is best for you and the food you are processing.

When getting ready to can a batch of food, have all your equipment clean and ready to go. The jars do not need to be sterile but must be freshly washed and clean. It is good to remember that in canning, cold should not be mixed with hot. That is, don't put boiling food into cool jars, cold food into hot jars, or set hot jars on a cool surface. I learned a lesson after many years of canning: every once in a while, a jar bottom would break during processing. Finally, I discovered that if I warmed up the canner before setting warm jars of food into it to process, I drastically reduced this breakage. Just turning the burner on a few seconds before placing the first jars in did the trick. Match the canner's bottom temperature with the jar temperatures.

Place a small pan of water on to boil. Separate the jar lids and drop into the water. Boil the lids, then remove them from the heat, but keep them warm.

Place the jars to be filled on a folded towel, then carefully fill each jar. The folded towel not only moderates the temperature from the table or counter surface, but it also catches spills making cleanup a snap.

Using a canning funnel helps keep foods from dripping onto the jar rim. You want to prevent this, especially with meats and poultry, as grease on the jar rim (or even a tiny bit of green bean) will keep the jar lid from sealing onto the jar rim correctly. An unsealed jar equals spoiled food.

Cut-up or whole green beans, potatoes, corn, other vegetables or meat, poultry, and fish may be placed in



A variety of foods canned in the pressure canner: left to right: beets, hominy, squash, chili, corn, carrots, elk meat, baked beans, asparagus, potatoes, and wild mushrooms.

the jar raw. This is the raw pack which I most often use. Canning books have gotten away from raw-packed meats. I believe it's because the writers felt that home canners would become sloppy and possibly cause incomplete processing, resulting in meat which might harbor harmful bacteria. It is possible, but personally I get tired of folks trying so hard to keep me safe from my own responsibilities. And when I have an elk to can—and an elk

is a lot of meat—I need to get it processed fast. So I still raw pack pieces of boneless meat. I am not advising others to do what I do; I am only explaining how I do it. You may well choose to hot pack partially cooked meat.

I place fat-free boneless steaks, roasts, stewing meat, and just plain chunks of meat into a clean jar. (I use everything from half pint jars to half gallon jars, but I always process jars of a like size together—I don't mix sizes.) A teaspoon full of salt may be added but is not necessary. Water is not usually added, so the jar rim is carefully washed with a warm damp cloth, the hot lid is put in place, and the ring is screwed down securely but not overly tight. The jar is now ready to put into the canner.

Hot-packed meat, such as partially cooked roast, steak, stew meat, boiled chicken and meat products, such as stew, chili, soup, etc. are put into warm jars. Liquid is



The author packs cold asparagus into clean jars.

usually added, i.e., broth or soup, the rim carefully wiped, the hot lid placed on, and the ring tightened.

Hot packing is great and convenient for canning large batches of spaghetti sauce, chili, stew, baked beans, canned dry pinto beans, etc. Just cook and dump into jars, then process. Okay, I'm simplifying, but once you get the hang of it you'll see it becomes that easy.

All raw meat should be heated or "exhausted" in the jars, which are placed in a pan of water deep enough to heat the jars thoroughly, while the water boils, but not so deep that the water boils into the open jars. Bring this pan to a slow boil and check with a meat thermometer inserted into the center of a jar. You need to heat the meat to 170° F, then quickly remove the jars from the bath with a jar lifter, place them on a folded towel, wipe the rims clean, and put the lids and rings firmly into place. Then place the jars in the canner and exhaust the canner. This means you should ensure there is a steady stream of forceful steam escaping the vent, not just spurts now and then.

After the canner is hot, i.e., exhausted, close the vent and begin raising the pressure until it reaches the desired processing pressure. Remember that most canning books give an average processing pressure of say 10 pounds. But if you live at an elevation higher than 1000 feet, you must bring the pressure up higher. Check your canning book for your exact pressure needs. Begin to count the processing time.

Keep the pressure at the correct reading by adjusting the heat under the canner or moving the canner gently on a wood range's surface or adding wood to the fire, as needed. If you let the pressure fluctuate, it will suck the fluid out of the jars. The resulting food will still be edible, but may be dry-tasting, or food bits may get under the jar lid making a proper seal impossible.

After the food has processed long enough, turn off the heat or remove the canner from heat. Allow the pressure to return to zero, then carefully remove the canner's lid—away from you, so escaping steam does not scald your arms or face. (Don't get in a hurry, thinking to just leave the jars in the canner with the lids on to cool. The jars will not seal correctly.)

Carefully set the hot jars, still boiling and bubbling, on a dry (never damp or the jars may crack) folded towel in a draft-free area to cool. Soon the telltale musical "pings" will let you know they are sealing. Never fool around with the hot jars or you may disturb the seal.

When the jars are perfectly cool to the touch, remove the rings, and wash them for next time. Then wash the jars with warm soapy water, rinse and dry them, and then store them in a cool, dry, and dark place.

Canning green beans

Pick the beans, wash them in cool water, and prepare to can them immediately. The beans may be canned whole, Frenched, or however your family likes them. I usually can a variety, from whole to Frenched, with the bulk cut into convenient chunks an inch or so long. Cut the beans, removing any tough strings, as well as the stem and pointy end, if desired. Using a canning funnel, dump the raw, cut beans into clean jars placed on a folded towel.

Pour two inches of water into the canner and place the basket or inner kettle into place. The canner must never boil dry or it will warp.

In the meantime, have enough lids separated and boiled. Also, have boiling a large pan of water with which you will cover the beans.

Fill all jars to within one inch of the rim. This is called "head space" and is necessary for proper processing and storage. In canning, you do not want to cram as much food into a jar as it will hold. Some foods expand as they

process, and all need a certain amount of head room to process and keep well. Always follow your canning book's directions exactly.

You may add a teaspoon full of salt to each jar if you want to enhance the flavor, but it is not necessary.

Pour boiling water into each jar, just covering the beans. Then carefully clean off the rim of each jar with a warm, damp cloth to remove any food bits which might prevent the jar from sealing, and check for nicks in the rim with a clean finger. Place the lids and rings into position. Do not over-tighten the rings. The ring only holds the lid securely into place for processing, and does not have anything to do with how well the jar seals.

Bring the canner up to the same approximate temperature as the jars, then carefully place the hot jars into the canner, taking care not to thunk them together. Leave space between jars to allow for steam to circulate during processing.

Tighten the canner lid, raise the heat to high, and allow the canner to exhaust. When a steady, forceful stream of steam blows from the vent, close it and let the pressure build up. When it reaches the correct pressure



*Bob cutting elk with a chain saw,
I'm getting ready to can!*

(10 pounds for altitudes less than 1,000 feet above sea level, but see your canning book for higher elevations), begin timing. Pints of green beans will be processed for 20 minutes, and quarts for 25 minutes.

At the end of this time, turn off the heat or remove the canner from the heat and allow the pressure to return to zero. When it does, unfasten the lid and carefully lift it away from you, allowing hot steam to escape away from your arms and face. Then remove the jars carefully with jar lifter, again not thumping them together, which could result in cracks. Place the hot jars on a dry folded towel in a draft-free area until they cool.

Canning ground meat

Any ground meat or ground meat products such as chili, spaghetti sauce, taco meat, etc., should be cooked before it is canned or it will not have a good texture. The meat will clump together in lumps. So, in a large frying pan fry the meat in as little grease as possible. (Grease is the #1 enemy of jars sealing). Add the spices you desire, then the tomato sauce, beans, chopped onions, or whatever.

Have clean canning jars on hand, kept hot in water. Also have a sufficient number of boiled lids on hand so that the process proceeds as quickly as possible.

Using a canning funnel, carefully fill each jar to within an inch of the rim (one inch head space), wipe the jar's rim with a warm, damp cloth and

Tips for canning meat and vegetables (Low acid foods)

1. Always use a pressure canner for all meats, fish, poultry, wild game, vegetables, and products containing these products such as soups, stews, sauces, etc.

2. If unsure of processing time, process the jars for the ingredient which requires the longest time. For instance, spaghetti sauce needs to be processed for the time given for meat, not tomatoes.

3. Can only fresh food. Never use questionable food for canning.

4. Remember, hot + cold = broken jars.

5. Never take shortcuts in processing time.

6. Following canning book directions results in wholesome, long-keeping canned food.

7. Get into the habit of checking and rechecking for nicks and cracks in jars. You'll save frustration, food, and money.

8. Don't try to pressure-can with arty jars that use zinc lids, or glass tops with wire bails, etc. You can't tell if they are sealed or not. A dangerous practice.

9. Don't experiment with recipes for canning until you are experienced and understand canning fundamentals completely. There are hundreds of tried and true recipes out there for you to gain experience with. (Spices may be varied to one's taste without endangering processing.)

10. Don't can meat with bones or fat intact, excepting fish or poultry. The bones and fat impart an unpleasant flavor at times, especially in game meat or mutton, and the bones take up unnecessary room in the jars. Also remember that fat is the #1 enemy of jars sealing.

11. Before eating or tasting a newly opened jar of food, visually check it for normal appearance and odor first. If there is any frothing, cloudy juices, unusual odor, or if a jar gushes or is not sealed when opening, then discard the contents where animals cannot get at it. This food is a definite risk. When it passes inspection, boil it for 15 minutes, just to be sure. This will kill bacteria that might make you sick.

inspect the jar again for any minute nicks.

Then screw the band snugly on over the hot lids and place each hot jar into the warm canner. Again, be careful not to thump the jars together as it could crack them.

Turn up the heat with the canner vent open, and wait until a steady stream of forceful steam exits the vent. When this happens, close the vent and wait until the pressure arrives at 10 pounds. (Again, if you are canning at altitudes over 1,000 feet above sea level, check your canning book, as the pressure must be increased with the increased altitude.) When the correct pressure is attained, begin to count the processing time. Be careful not to let the pressure fluctuate as it can blow liquid out of the jar.

Pints will be finished in one hour and fifteen minutes and quarts in an hour and a half. I process half pints, which are very handy for casseroles, etc., for one hour and fifteen minutes.

Some reliable food processing books

The Ball Blue Book (the Guide to Home Canning and Freezing), Alltrista Corporation Direct Marketing Department PK31, P.O. Box 2005, Muncie, IN 47307-0005, \$5.95, including shipping. IN residents add 5% tax

Putting Food By, by Hertzberg, Vaughan & Green, Stephen Green Press

Stocking Up, by Carot Hupping, Rodale Press

Other great books are available, of course. Check out your local book store (or their catalog) and the library. Your county extension officer, usually located in the courthouse, can usually provide free (or very low cost) canning publications and leaflets.

When the jars have processed for the correct amount of time, turn off the heat or carefully remove the canner from the heat, and allow the pressure to return to zero. (Do not try to hurry this by fooling with the exhaust valve or you may end up with broken jars or jars that do not seal.)

Carefully remove the cover away from you to avoid steam burns, then take the jars out carefully and place them on a folded, dry towel in a draft-free place to cool.

When completely cool—overnight is best—remove the rings. Then carefully wash each jar in warm soapy water, dry them, and store them in a cool, dark, dry place. This meat will last indefinitely, regardless of what you have been led to believe.

Home canning meats and vegetables should be a part of your family's lifestyle as you strive for more self-reliance and control over what you eat. It is so simple to learn, with easy-to-follow instructions readily available for almost any sort of food from green beans to shrimp. This allows your family more freedom to not only eat well, economically, but to save hundreds of dollars a year. And it provides the convenience of having a sumptuous meal ready in minutes whenever company comes or when you are in a hurry. After all, how else can we have a complete roast elk dinner ready in half an hour—meat, potatoes, onions, carrots and green beans?

Δ

Preserve mushroom harvests

By Eudene Murphy

While on a camping and hunting trip in the mountains, we met a man who was looking for mushrooms. He showed us some very good ones which we enjoyed nearly every day. I sliced some steaks from the hanging venison and placed them on a grill over a small charcoal fire. Meanwhile, I sauteed the mushrooms in butter. We ate like kings.

We've found several different mushrooms in our area that are good to eat. Some can be found only a few weeks, like the morel. Others are plentiful for a season. Among our favorites are the morel, puffball, coral, oyster, and chicken-of-the-woods. A field guide with photos will identify the edible mushroom. Positively identify each one collected.

I tried different ways to preserve mushrooms, but with little success until I found an old recipe called Duxelles. The mushrooms are cooked with other ingredients and then frozen. Duxelles can be used to make soup, sauces, or added to meat or vegetables.

Mushrooms will grow delicately around leaves, twigs, grass stems, and bark. These parts will have to be

trimmed away. Pick over mushrooms carefully because all kinds of little insects like to live in and on them. Cut away parts that are tough or inedible. Rinse well in cold water. Set aside the best parts for frying or to be used soon. Use the rest for Duxelles.

Press out excess liquid and chop finely. Melt one fourth cup butter and two tablespoons cooking oil in a frying pan. Add two cups of prepared mushrooms and one small onion, chopped. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly until liquid is evaporated and mixture is dry but not brown. Add salt and pepper to taste, a dash of nutmeg and a teaspoon of parsley flakes. Mix well and cool. Store in a covered jar in the refrigerator or in a plastic bag in the freezer. Duxelles is a convenient and versatile addition to many dishes.

Sometimes a large amount of mushrooms will be found. Preparing Duxelles is a good way to preserve them.

Become familiar with the edible then frozen. Duxelles can be used to mushrooms in your area. They are a delicious natural food and quite a treat that fits right in with country living. Δ



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Dad's incredible (secret ingredient) holiday ham

By Don Fallick

The first Christmas after my divorce, I decided to break with tradition and cook a ham. It would be my first holiday season as cook, and I wanted the pièce de résistance to be memorable, delicious, and within my limited ability. I also wanted it to be cheap. Hams are quite cheap around Christmas, even ones big enough to feed our large family. Over the years, it has become a holiday tradition around our house. I've learned a few things about cooking ham including a "secret ingredient" that makes it taste better than the commercial "honey baked" kind.

Ingredients:

1 whole, "bone in" ham, at least 1 lb. per person
 1 box of whole cloves
 1 pint "secret ingredient" — fresh apple juice
 canned or fresh pineapple, or candied crab-apple rings
 applesauce
 cinnamon powder (optional)
 potatoes for baking
 aluminum foil
 traditional holiday side dishes

Buy ham with the bone left in. "Bone in" hams are not only cheaper than boneless ones, they taste better. When butchers remove the bone from a ham, they also take some of the tastiest meat, found right next to the bone. Also, the bone helps conduct heat right into the center of the ham, cooking it from the inside and the outside. So the ham stays moist and tender. "Cook before serving" hams generally cost less than "fully cooked" or "ready to eat." They'll take a bit longer to cook, but are otherwise just as good. If you have a smaller family, you may want to buy a half ham, or even a "picnic" ham. This is nothing more than the shoulder of the animal, instead of its rump. If you smoke your own ham, you can use either the front or rear leg of the pig, or even make ham from goats or other animals.

Place the ham fat-side up on a rack in an open roasting pan. The rack keeps the meat up out of the drippings. Bake at 325°F. Baking time depends on the weight of the ham and whether it is fully cooked ("ready to eat") or not. See the cooking timetable for specific cooking times.

Every recipe I've seen says to use a meat thermometer and bake cooked hams to 130°F, or uncooked hams to 160°F. Temperatures are the same for half-hams of 5 to 8 pounds, but add 10 degrees for an uncooked picnic ham. If you have a meat thermometer, use it. I've never owned one, so I go by the time and have never had a problem.

Ham is much easier to carve if you let it "set" for 15 minutes or so after it comes out of the oven. It will continue to cook in its own internal heat, so take it out 5 degrees cooler than the required temperature, or count the "setting" time as part of the baking time if you don't use a meat thermometer.

However you decide to tell when the ham is done, it's important to know in advance how long it'll take, so you can take the ham out of the oven and slash it. One hour before the ham is done, remove it from the oven. You'll need a meat fork to hold it, as it'll be too hot to handle. Using a very sharp knife, slash open the rind and fat all the way to the meat, in parallel lines one inch apart. Then make parallel slashes approximately perpendicular to the first lines, creating one-inch squares or diamond shapes. Stick a clove in the center of each square or diamond. Baste freely with fresh apple juice and return to the oven. Baste with fresh juice every 10 minutes or so until the ham is done.

While you've got the oven open to slash your ham, pop a few foil-wrapped spuds in to bake. I

like thick skinned, brown potatoes best. But then, I eat the skins.

Actually, any variety of potato you come across is OK to bake.

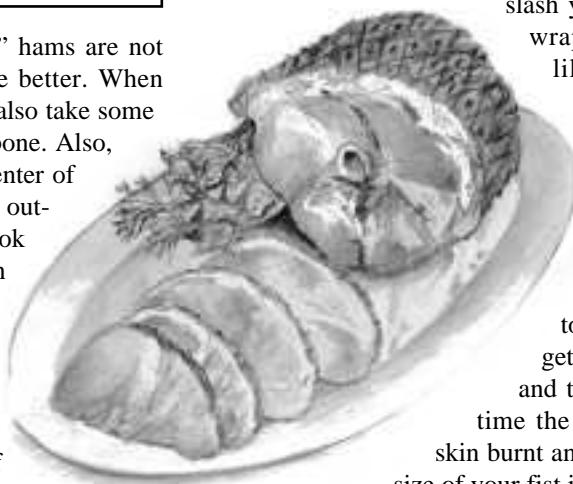
Size is more important than variety. If the potatoes are too big, they won't

get done in time. Too small, and they'll be overdone by the

time the ham is cooked, with the skin burnt and unappetizing. About the

size of your fist is a good size for baking at

this relatively low temperature. If you've got great big spuds, leave them in a few minutes longer while you carve the ham. Just be sure you don't forget them.



Carving

Use a solid meat fork and two separate carving knives: one with a long, narrow blade for cutting around the bone, and another with a wide, serrated blade for slicing the ham.

Cooking timetable for ham
Oven temperature 325 degrees

Type and cut	Weight range	Meat thermometer temperature	Cooking time (min. per lb.)
Fully cooked			
whole	10 - 15 lbs.	130°F	10 - 15
half	5 - 7 lbs.	130°F	18 - 24
picnic	5 - 8 lbs.	130°F	25 - 30
Uncooked			
whole	10 - 15 lbs.	160°F	18 - 20
half	5 - 7 lbs.	160°F	22 - 25
picnic	5 - 8 lbs.	170°F	35

Both should be very sharp. I like to use the time while the ham is baking to touch up the blades of my carving knives. The kids have come to associate the sound of a knife on steel with scrumptious food. It's a memory that'll last them

a lifetime. Place the ham directly on a firm surface, such as a chopping block or clean table. It will likely drip grease on the surface, so protection for your clothes is in order. The first time I tried carving a ham, I tried to do it right on the serving platter, and it wouldn't hold still.

Holding the ham with the fork, and using the long, thin knife, cut all the way around the bone. Stay as close to the bone as you can. Some of the tastiest meat is located there. Then change knives and cut off slices about 1/4-inch thick or so. If you like your ham thin-sliced, cut it that way. It won't affect the flavor. And the ham will be so tender, thick slices won't be noticeably harder to chew than thin ones. I just like the visual effect of a big, thick slab of ham on the plate. Garnish with pineapple or candied crab-apple rings, and serve with applesauce. The applesauce is for dipping chunks of ham into, and may be lightly dusted with cinnamon powder when served. Add whatever holiday side dishes are traditional around your house. And never reveal the "secret" ingredient. Δ

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Use common herbs to treat the common cold

By Bill Palmroth

So you feel a cold coming on. What are you going to do about it? Run to the drug store for some Anacin, AlkaSeltzer, decongestants, and a lot of cough drops? Oh, no! What you need to do instead is help Mother Nature do her housecleaning with fruits, juices, pure water, and herbal laxatives. Also, it is best to stop eating mucus-forming foods—dairy products, meats, and even flour. Remember, a cold is nature's way of cleaning toxins from the system, and it does not have to put you in bed feeling miserable.

At the first sneeze, chill, or watery eyes, hop into a "ginger" bath—about four tablespoons of powdered ginger per hot tub, and soak for 20 minutes. This will pull toxins through the pores of your skin.

Consider some Vitamin C, the infection fighter. It also increases resistance.

Vitamin A will heal those mucus linings, particularly those in the respiratory system, and it is a protector of the cells.

Then there are herbs: garlic, echinacea, capsicum, fenugreek, and goldenseal. They fight and pull those rascally bugs and mucus out of your system. Fenugreek, in particular, helps loosen mucus in the system and goldenseal is healing to mucus membranes, while both garlic and echinacea are natural antibiotics and capsicum helps all the herbs do their job of healing and nourishing the system (lots of natural Vitamin C) and is stimulating. Herbs are meant to regulate organs and glands, correct the balance, and cleanse the cells. They are not as palatable as fresh fruit, but they are workers.

Fruit has the ability to dissolve mucus from the body and works as a

laxative in the bowels. Herbal laxatives help move the waste out of the body.

Emily Glenn, a certified herbalist in Portland, Oregon, put me on to a garlic-based cold remedy that works wonders on all virus cold symptoms and is especially good for sore throats. My own experience with this remedy has been excellent, and I highly recommend it to others.



To one quart of water, add a whole ball of garlic cloves (unpeeled) and a grapefruit which has been peeled and quartered. Rapid boil the ingredients

Herbs will do more to help eliminate the symptoms of a cold and make you feel better in just hours than any medicine on the market.

for 20 minutes, then strain the mixture into a container.

In addition to being an excellent source of Vitamin C, juice from the grapefruit adds flavoring to the remedy which helps neutralize the strong garlic taste.

Drink a hot cup of the remedy once every hour for as long as it lasts. By then, your cold symptoms should be gradually diminishing. However, you can make another batch and repeat the dosage if you feel it is necessary.

Herbs will do more to help eliminate the symptoms of a cold and make you

feel better in just hours than any medicine on the market. The last time I began sneezing and getting watery-eyed, I took a dropperful of echinacea-goldenseal liquid extract every two hours and by bedtime that evening it was obvious that my big battle was over. My cold symptoms had almost completely disappeared and I was feeling much better.

Earlier, I took the same compound herbal extract to fight off the flu bug. On that occasion, I found that echinacea alone didn't do much to relieve my flu symptoms. I needed something more effective and I found it in the echinacea-goldenseal liquid extract.

Let's examine both echinacea and goldenseal to determine why they work so well together as cold and flu fighters:

Echinacea stimulates the immune system in colds, flu, and sore throat, increasing the body's ability to resist infection, especially the production of white blood cells. It is considered one of the best blood cleansers and is called the King of Blood Purifiers. Echinacea contains vitamins A, E, and C, iron, iodine, copper, sulphur, and potassium.

Goldenseal is valuable for all catarrhal conditions and has the ability to heal mucus membranes anywhere in the body. It ranks high as one of the best general medicinal aids in the herbal kingdom. When taken with other herbs, such as echinacea, it increases the tonic properties for whatever ailment is being treated.

Goldenseal contains Vitamin A and C. It also contains Vitamin B-complex, E, F, calcium, copper, potassium, lots of phosphorus, manganese, iron, zinc, and sodium.

The next time a cold strikes, try the natural way to help nature eliminate the toxins from your body—herbs, vitamins, minerals, juices, and fruit. Δ

Ayoob on firearms

By Massad Ayoob

Home defense handguns: simplicity suffices

You can get as high-tech as you feel you might need when you select the firearm(s) you'll use to protect your family. I "do firearms" for a living, and the gun I prefer to have at the bedside is a customized Beretta 92 with super-accurate Jarvis barrel and kick-reducing Magna-Port. It has night sights and an attached SureFire flashlight, and is loaded with an extended 20-round magazine of 115 grain +P+ 9mm hollowpoints.

Does one need to go that high-tech? Frankly, no. A basic handgun will get you through tough challenges. If I was going to have only one firearm in the home for family protection, it would be a handgun. Despite the greater power and other advantages of a rifle or shotgun, it's seldom practical to take one outside when trouble is expected. You can't answer a late-night knock at the door with a long gun in your hand without the risk of terrifying an innocent visitor.

The fact that a basic handgun will get the job done was reinforced for me recently at the New Hampshire State Championships of IDPA, the International Defensive Pistol Association. IDPA was developed by a group of pistol champions and tac-

tics instructors who wanted a skill test environment for the kind of handguns cops and lawfully armed citizens use for protection.

Which handgun? Most people shoot semiautomatics better (i.e., faster and straighter) than revolvers. Their more modern designs simply have better human engineering. The overall top shot at the match and champion in the Custom Defensive Pistol category was Mark Mazzotta, a grandmaster shooter. His gun, lightly customized by Bill Wilson, was a Colt Government Model .45 auto. This was the primary US military handgun from 1911 to the present, with Delta Force still using it in lieu of the Beretta 9mm that is otherwise standard military issue. The only difference between Mark's pistol and the one you might have inherited from your grandfather is that Mark's has been made more accurate with a crisper trigger pull.

Many feel that a high cartridge capacity 9mm makes the most sense for a home defense handgun that might have to be grabbed so suddenly that you can't access spare ammunition. A 16-shot Smith & Wesson PC 5906 was the gun that Bristol, Connecticut, cop Bryce Linskey used



Massad Ayoob

to win both first place in Stock Service Pistol category and top score by a law enforcement officer. It has a smoother action and greater accuracy potential than a stock S&W 9mm, thanks to the ministrations of the S&W Performance Center, but at across-the-room distance will be equalled in performance by the S&W Model 59 pistol your dad might have bought in 1970.

Others split the difference between round count and per-shot power. Winner of the Enhanced Service Pistol class was Tom Calandra, using a Para-Ordnance P-16. This Canadian pistol is essentially a very well made copy of the 1911 Colt, capable of firing 16 rounds of the .40 Smith & Wesson cartridge. The .40 has for many provided the compromise between the high capacity, medium power 9mm pistol and the lower capacity, higher power .45.

A compact 9mm with fewer rounds can also suffice. The female state champion was LFI instructor Deb



Mark Mazzotta uses a "plain vanilla" Colt Government Model .45 to win the NH IDPA state championships. This gun has protected our nation and its citizens since 1911. Note that there are no scopes, compensators, flashlights, lasers, bells or whistles attached.

Morris. She used the HK P7M8 that she carries daily in a Mitch Rosen "Nancy Special," a hip holster especially designed around the female anatomy. The ergonomics and reliability of this 9-shot 9mm compact pistol mean more to Deb than a few less rounds in the magazine.

Finally, the reliable old revolver is still the general recommendation for first-time handgunners. I managed to win the Stock Service Revolver title with a Smith & Wesson Model 625, the lineal descendant of the World War I S&W 1917 model that was designed to fire the .45 Auto service cartridge with the rounds held together by metal clips. Modern "moon clips" allow a very fast reload of this accurate six-shooter. Half a dozen rounds will still get you through the great majority of "shots fired" home defense situations.

Al Greco had done an action job on my revolver. Is custom gunsmithing necessary for the sixgun to "keep up" with autos? Not necessarily. In second place was the winner of the Winter National Championships of IDPA, Brent Purucker of Smith & Wesson Academy. He uses a box-stock S&W Model 13 .357 Magnum with four inch barrel and what felt like a fourteen pound trigger pull. This simple fixed-sight revolver is part of the Smith & Wesson Military and Police series that was introduced in 1899. It's not the gun so much as it's the shooter.

In closing, let me say that when you analyze the outcomes of a lot of violent encounters, you discover that "did you have a gun" and "did you know how to use your gun" are questions a helluva lot more important than "what kind of gun did you have."

If you have a good quality firearm and know how and when to use it, don't worry about having all the high-tech goodies.

For information on IDPA and matches near you, contact IDPA PO Box 639, Berryville, AR 72616, website www.idpa.com. Δ

The Ninth Year

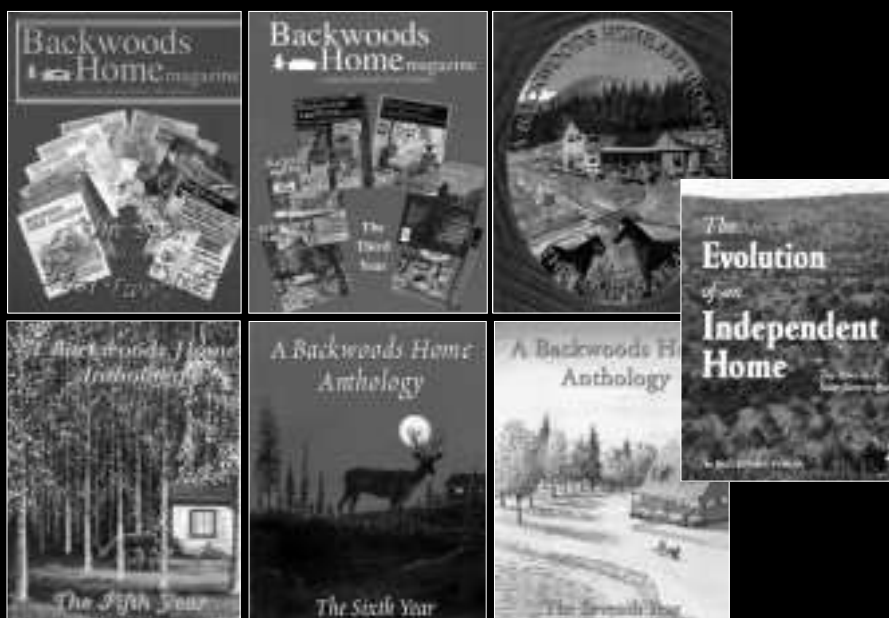
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Victory Gardens

By Alice Brantley Yeager
(Photos by James O. Yeager)

There have been very few times in our nation's history when "We, the people" have banded together so fiercely as we did during World War II. We were united in our effort to bring about a successful end to the global conflict and we went about it with utmost dedication. Everyone had someone—husband, sweetheart, relative, friend, neighbor—who was in the armed services. Many of us who remained at home were employed in the defense industry, but no matter where we worked we were all supportive of the war effort.

Certain foods were rationed, as well as tires and gasoline. We had our shoes repaired and we forgot about buying new cars. Most of us depended on crowded buses and trains to get to wherever we wanted to go. A sense of pride swept over us every time we heard our national anthem or saw our flag displayed. Patriotism spilled over into every facet of our lives. Food gardens weren't merely "gardens." They were Victory Gardens! We were urged to grow as much as we could, and a pantry filled with home-canned vegetables was something to be proud of. The home front's frugality made it possible to ship much needed food supplies overseas to support our troops.

Anyone who had space to grow anything in the food line got out his gardening tools and laid out rows for a

garden. Some of the folks, who couldn't do much actual gardening, managed to prepare "V" shaped plots on their front lawns and fill them with bright colored flowers. V for victory! On many porches there were large pots of red, white, and blue petunias. Anywhere you looked, someone was doing his part to show support for the war effort. Even lawns of public buildings had special flower beds designed to remind passers-by of our team effort.

Now it doesn't seem so important to hawk the virtues of the Victory Gardens. We're not at war and there are supermarkets brimming over with every kind of produce imaginable and from every country on earth. We used to enjoy local fruits and vegetables during their seasons. Now we may have almost anything we want at any time of year. Abundance is ours.

Despite the overwhelming amount of produce available, the fact stands out that a great deal of this produce cannot measure up to the great taste of the things we harvest from our own kitchen gardens. With every mile produce is hauled, flavor is sacrificed. What is it they say about sweet corn? To enjoy peak flavor, run as fast as you can to the kitchen with your fresh



A variety of peppers—some spicy, some not—provide wonderful flavor for all sorts of dishes from salads to salsa.

ears of corn. Strip away the shucks and silks and drop the clean ears into a pot of boiling water. Cover and let simmer five to seven minutes. Then remove to a plate, dribble with butter, season with salt and pepper if you like, and enjoy. No loss of flavor here!

And what about those bargain-priced bins of green beans often seen at odd times in the produce markets? A complete waste of time and money if you're looking for flavor. If flavor is missing, you can bet something else has slipped away too.

To go back to the Victory Garden idea may not be a bad thing. We can certainly have some personal victories over our choice of food supplies and we can enjoy varieties of home grown produce never seen in markets. We also know we're getting food that is free of pesticides.

One of the first requirements for the Victory Garden was a load of "well-

rotted barnyard manure” which was spread over the garden plot, dug in and allowed to rest for several weeks prior to planting. Depending on the severity of the climate, some gardeners also applied a thick coating of mulch.

The well-rotted barnyard manure may not be as available today in some areas as it was during the forties and before. However, some of the best fertilizer to be found comes from chicken houses where litter is cleaned out after every flock is sent to market. Poultry manure is twice as valuable as cow manure on the basis of nutrients contained. Gardeners need to be aware of what is available locally at a reasonable cost. County Extension agents are often a good source of information as they are in touch with their agricultural communities.

A well balanced soil should not be dependent on the usage of a lot of chemicals or soil additives. Unfortunately, since World War II we seem to have drifted toward dependency on chemicals. We use them to enhance production, kill weeds, fight off intruders, eliminate bugs, and on and on. When I walk into the chemical section of a gardening supply house, I often wonder how the employees survive their place of employment and, usually, no one is wearing a protective mask. This is a far cry from a load of well-rotted manure.

Recently a lady told me she has some friends who give her cucumbers. “They’re perfect looking, but they taste bitter. Do you know what causes them to be bitter?” I told her my guess is that the growers are using a commercial fertilizer. I have never tasted an organically grown cucumber that was bitter.

A good compost pile is one of the best friends a gardener can have, and it’s not difficult to start. Just select a convenient spot accessible to the garden and enclose a space about four-feet by four-feet with some type of fencing that will keep the compost contained and provide good air circu-



Let’s not forget to protect our garden friends such as this green tree frog who makes his livelihood devouring insects. No pesticides please!

lation. Have an easy side opening so you may occasionally stir or turn over the pile. Start putting in kitchen waste (egg shells, vegetable peelings, wilted flowers, etc., but **no** meat scraps), lawn trimmings, leaves—anything organic. Avoid any grass or weeds that have gone to seed as you don’t want to spread a crop of gremlins

every time you use the compost on your garden plot.

A shredder is a very useful machine to have to aid in pulverizing shrubbery and vine clippings, rose trimmings, and all manner of small greenery. The smaller the particles, the sooner they will decompose into that black gold known as compost. Along with the compost will come earthworms. When the latter appear, welcome them with a dance around the compost bin. Who cares what the neighbors think. This is a type of victory in itself.

Here in southwest Arkansas (Zone 8), as in many places, we gardeners are lucky enough to be able to garden almost all year long. We have cool season gardens when we grow many types of greens, onions, radishes, etc. During the summer a greater number of vegetables may be grown.

One of our most anticipated summertime treats is a salad made from our homegrown vegetables—tomatoes, onions, sweet peppers, cucumbers—all cut in chunks and ready for a favorite salad dressing. Personally, I prefer a bit of plain mayonnaise as it doesn’t detract from the wonderful fresh flavors of the veggies.

Exit supermarket. Victory is ours. Δ



Mixed vegetables—squash, peppers, tomatoes, beans, and sprigs of sweet basil—promise real culinary treats.

Simplify life in your backwoods home by using these easy mountain methods

By Rev. J.D. Hooker

Backwoods folk, or in my case, mountain folk, are typically very resourceful, utilizing whatever is on hand to make their lives easier and more pleasant. And hill-women are just as particular about neatness and cleanliness as their city-bred sisters. In fact they can frequently become almighty vocally abusive towards anyone foolhardy enough to track mud across their clean floors.



Deer antler coat and rack

So here are a few simple mountain methods I and some of my neighbors have used to make our life easier. The first couple can save you and the missus from a tremendous amount of hollering.

1. Boot scraper:

Even in mail-order catalogs you won't come across items like this everyday, and when you do they're generally fashioned of thin, stamped

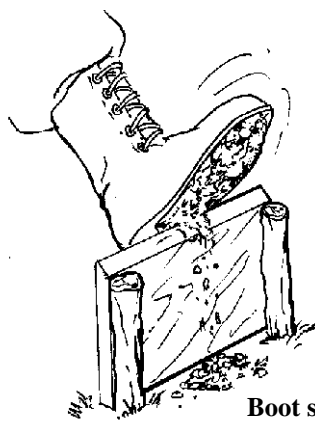
metal useful mainly for looking at. Yet, by merely driving a couple of strong hardwood stakes into the ground just outside your door and using a few nails to attach a beveled piece of hardwood 1-inch x 6-inches or 1-inch x 8-inches, it's easy to scrape the mud and gunk off the bottoms of your shoes before heading inside.

2. Boot jack:

While I've seen these offered in equestrian shops and catalogs, they usually cost upwards of 20 bucks. As you can very readily see from the illustration, this same thing, serving exactly the same purpose, is simply put together from nothing more than a couple of stout sticks and a nail or two. So why not keep your cash in your own pocket while staying safely out of trouble by easily removing your muddy footwear before tracking indoors?

3. Planting sticks:

English gardeners have their "dib-bles," with which they poke nice neat holes in their soil for ease in planting seeds, small bulbs, and so forth. In the Appalachian hill country, most folks would never even dream



Boot scraper

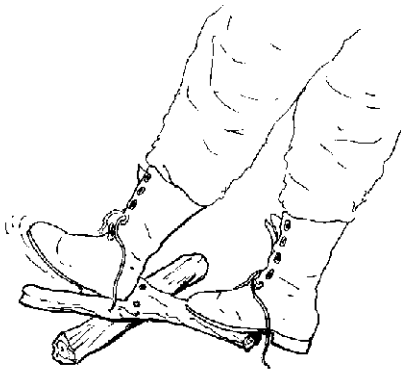


The missus amid her shotshell cupboard door and drawer pulls

of shelling out hard-to-come-by cash for such a simple gadget. Especially when the same thing is so readily user-produced from nothing more than a properly forked limb. While such simple "dibbles" are pretty ideal for planting small kitchen gardens and beds, when planting larger areas it's more normal to see one parent striding along with one sharply pointed walking stick in each hand, poking planting holes in two parallel rows at a time, while the other parent, or maybe one of the older children, follows behind dropping seeds into the holes. In the meantime, the smaller kids will be bringing up the rear, kicking dirt over each hole and firming up the soil over the seeds.

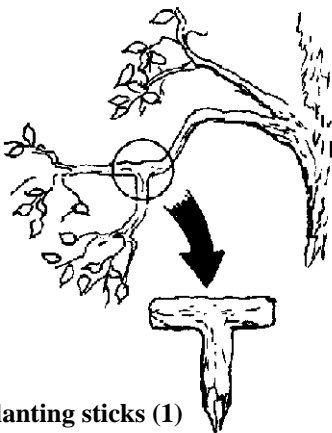
4. Coat and hat "racks:"

Though many mountain families have a variety of wooden pegs driven into the walls, mantel, and other



Boot jack

handy places inside of the house, many consider the simple single deer antler multi-purpose rack, as shown in the photo, to be the best option of all. Depending upon the number of tines, such a ready-made rack can be used to hang a person's coat, hat, gloves, or mittens, and maybe even a thick woolen scarf or two. Simply drill or burn a couple of holes through the heavy part of the antler's main beam and nail in place.



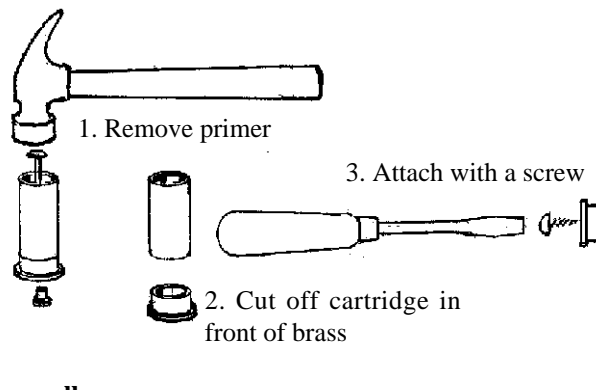
Planting sticks (1)

5. Shotgun door and drawer pulls, and buttons:

"Use it over, use it up, make it do, or do without" seems to be one of the major credos which the hill people live by. Hunters in this area, which usually include everyone old enough to tote a firearm, aren't any exception. Maybe mountain folk are better known for their superb rifle marksmanship, but in very many cases a shotgun has been found to be a much

more versatile working firearm, and smoothbores are at least as common as rifled guns in much of the eastern mountains.

When I was a youngster, reloading "tools" usually consisted of a hammer and large nail, a few large washers, about a 3-inch length of $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch iron pipe, and a couple of short dowel-like sticks. In any case, shotgun shells are normally repeatedly reloaded until they are absolutely used up, worn out, and completely unsafe to reload any longer. Even after they've reached this point these hulls still aren't usually discarded, but go into a box, bucket, or can of "calamities" until they are



Drawer pulls

needed to fashion drawer pulls or buttons, as required.

Carefully following the illustrations will allow you to use up your own worn-out shotgun hulls in a worthwhile manner. They really do add a nice, and rather unique, look when employed in this manner.

6. Corn shuck mop:

I've already mentioned that Appalachian mountain women are just as fastidious about housekeeping as any city women might be, while they're also usually exactly frugal and mighty inventive, using up anything and everything available to keep their domicile in tip-top condition. And this is how this simple, hard-scrubbing mop very probably was born. I can picture some long ago mountain wife devising such a handy contraption from practically nothing at all, with women in the surrounding

mountains and valleys readily duplicating her newly devised invention.

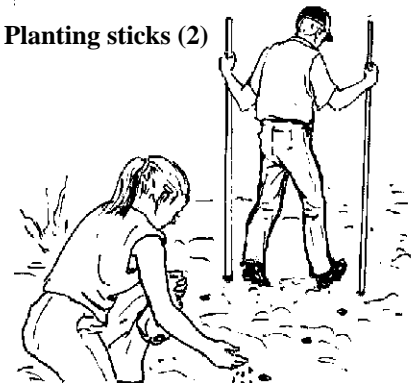
Using nothing more than a piece of board, a small quantity of leftover corn shucks, and a stout stick handle for materials, and a drill with $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch bit, a sharp knife, and a pair of sharp scissors as tools, it's relatively easy to follow the illustrations in fashioning your own corn shuck mop, entirely capable of scrubbing floors and such just as well as anything that's available at the mall.

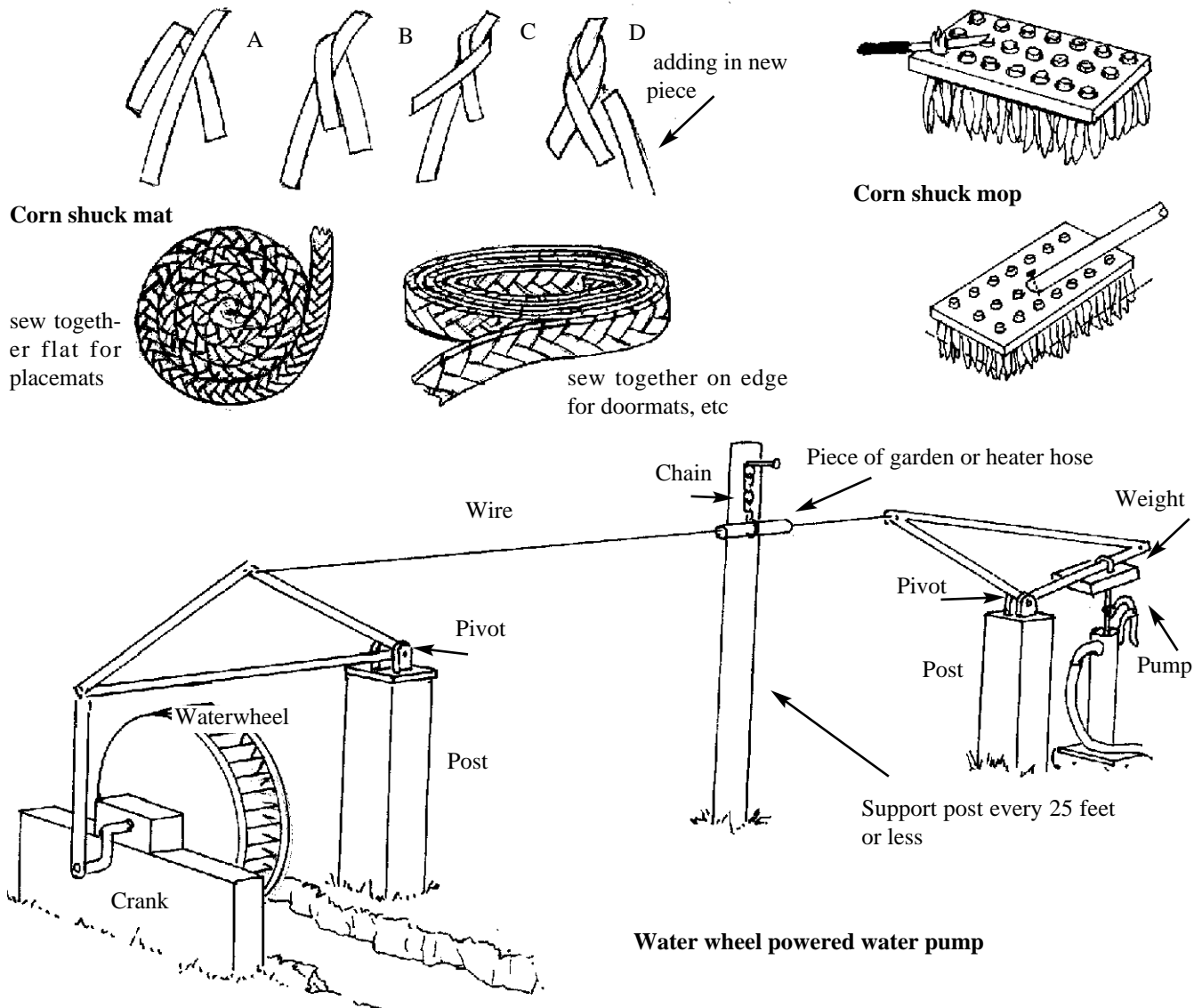
7. Corn shuck mats:

Whether the interest might be in producing corn meal, grits, hominy, or 'shine, corn is the staple crop of these

Appalachian ranges. It's from one of this crop's byproducts—the shucks or husks removed from around the ears—that door mats, table setting place mats, and many similar items are traditionally home-manufactured. As shown in the illustrations, very simple braiding and sewing techniques are the only skills you need to

Planting sticks (2)





produce an array of good, usable, and unique items.

8. Water wheel water pump:

Though this particular mountain-style craft is a bit more complex to put together than the rest of these projects, it's still a worthwhile endeavor. Actually, it's only been during the last couple of decades that electrically-powered well pumps have become affordably available throughout most of these mountain regions. In fact, until quite recently even shallow wells have been considered as exceptionally valuable commodities. Of course clear, cold mountain streams are pret-

ty common in the area, but streams still don't just flow right in to your standard stock tank or out of your kitchen tap.

I don't know right when these hardy and inventive mountain dwelling folks figured out that it was possible to harness the power flowing through these mountain streams to operate the pumps drawing water from their wells and cisterns, but it must have been a mighty long time ago because my grandmother (long since deceased) remembered the method shown in the illustration to have already been a very old idea when she was in her

early childhood. While similar set-ups are still seeing daily use today in many areas, there isn't any reason this won't work just as well in any off-grid location.

So whether your own rural homestead is located somewhere along Florida's eastern seaboard, northern California's coast, or any place in between, many of these methods and contrivances, developed or used by the rugged hill-folk of the Appalachian mountain regions, are readily put to good use in any remote area. It just takes a mite of a backwoods attitude. Δ

Enjoy cheap, delicious lettuce all through the winter months

By Robert L. Williams

Last winter, when the price of lettuce was \$2 per head, one of my family's great pleasures was going out into the garden and picking a basket of crisp, green, tasty lettuce for the salads which make up a large part of our meals.

By the end of the winter we estimated that we had saved hundreds of dollars on that one crop of greens alone. Keep in mind that we eat lots and lots of salads, and we picked lettuce from the winterized lettuce bed from the first of September until the end of May, which meant that if we picked three or four times a week, we were saving about \$6 weekly, \$24 monthly, and about \$216 over the winter and early spring.

And of the amount we saved, all but about 75¢ was pure profit. Our only expenses were a few seeds and a sprinkling of fertilizer. There were no hidden costs of any sort.

Before you rush out to build your winter lettuce patch, look at a few basic values and ideas. First, the lettuce crop was always protected from rabbits, deer, woodchucks, and other critters that like to eat our gardens.

Second, remember how long it takes to wash leaf lettuce to be sure to get all the insects and their leavings off the plants? In our patch there simply were no insects and therefore no insect debris of any sort.

Third, when heavy rains water your outdoor lettuce patch, you must wash repeatedly to get all the grit off the lettuce. In our little patch, there was no time when the rain actually struck the plants or the soil next to the plants. We could, if we had wished, have eaten the lettuce straight from the garden, without washing it at all. We did wash it, but only for aesthetic purposes

more than to eliminate contaminants.

Fourth, when most garden crops are covered with or at least dusted with insecticides, we had no worries because we never had a reason to dust or spray the plants.

Fifth, and perhaps most important, we found that there were many produce stand operators who would happily have bought all the excess lettuce



Elizabeth Williams picks some winter lettuce in the snow.

we could provide. This means that if we had made the patch five or ten times as large as we did, we could have sold many dollars worth of lettuce. By modest estimates, we could have easily sold several hundreds of dollars worth.

Now it's time to rush out to build the lettuce bed. In our case there was no cost of materials at all, and we did not have to drive to a supply store or anywhere else to pick up the materials. In fact, all we needed was in our storage house behind our own home.

The time spent in constructing the lettuce bed was, believe it or not, less than 15 minutes.

So there are the arguments for doing what we did. I have listed several

advantages, and I would have listed some of the disadvantages, if I could think of any.

Here's how to do it. At least, here's how we did it. If you have a plan that works better, then use your own methods. You may find materials that worked better than ours did, although I can't think of many ways that would be much simpler or easier than our methods.

One final point concerning the money saved or earned. I have mentioned that we saved more than \$200 in lettuce at the cost of the rabbit food in mid-winter. But the savings are even greater than I indicated.

How? Simply because when you have a large salad with a meal, you need far less of the other foods. So if you have a small steak, a baked potato, and a whopping salad, you need little if anything else. Or if you have a small serving of roast beef, you can leave off the green beans, peas, or other additions to the meal. Here's the way we did it.

We had an old storm door that we had taken down months earlier and we felt that the door was too good to throw away but not good enough to use on the house. We had thought that maybe one day we would build a small shed where the door would have been useful to us. But to that date the door had simply gathered dust.

We then found several concrete blocks that we had salvaged earlier from an old building. With the blocks we simply outlined the rectangle that the storm door would cover and then laid the storm door over the blocks.

That was it! Can you imagine anything simpler? Inside the rectangle we scattered lettuce seeds, put the door in place, and waited.

And that's when we learned just what an advantage we had in our mini-greenhouse. Because the cement blocks retained heat so well, and because the storm door glass admitted plenty of light and kept out the cold, the temperature inside the rectangle stayed at an ideal level at all times.

This meant that the lettuce grew at an amazing speed, so that we were starting to pick within a few short days of the time we planted.

We sowed leaf lettuce rather than head lettuce, largely because the leaf lettuce can be picked daily, and the heads of lettuce can be picked only once. It is true, however, that if you start picking individual leaves of the head lettuce, the heads will not form and you can pick leaf lettuce regularly.

With the rectangle in place and the storm door on top, you can rest assured that in moderate climates you will have no worries that the lettuce will freeze. I do not know that this method will work in extremely cold areas, but in the foothills of the North Carolina mountains we have days in which the temperature drops to below zero degrees Fahrenheit.

During the winter we had many days when temperatures were in the teens and even in single-digit numbers, and at no time did we see any signs of freezing lettuce. We picked day after day when the ground was covered with snow or when the nearby trees were coated with freezing rain.

On several occasions we had to scrape several inches of snow off the storm door in order to raise it so we could get to the lettuce. The crop began its first yield in September and we had fresh lettuce all during the fall, winter, and into late spring.

We don't know this for a fact, but it seemed that the winter cold kept the lettuce from maturing and going to seed. We have for years planted lettuce beds, but we have never seen a crop yield for such a long period of time.

The lettuce continued to grow, even in the colder weather, and the only time we had damage was when the tips of leaves came into contact with the icy storm door. There was, in essence, a sort of freezer burn, but only on the very tips.

Will we repeat the winter lettuce bed? It was one hundred per cent

delightful, economical, and aesthetically rewarding. I can think of no reason that we will not repeat the experiment. The only changes I can imagine making are to enlarge the bed and to try other crops, such as radishes and other greens.

You do not need a storm door, of course; you can use windows, sheets of plexiglass, heavy plastic, or any other material that will permit light and keep out the cold. And instead of cement blocks you can use thick and wide boards. The wood is also great insulation, and you may be able to find scrap lumber more readily than you can get cement blocks.

Whatever you use, I think you will be delightfully surprised by the results. And you'll be a little richer, too. Δ

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THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a new feature in *Backwoods Home Magazine*. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to *BHM*, P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. There is no payment for jokes used.)

A guy walks into a flower store and says, "I'd like three dozen of those beautiful anemones you've been advertising." The shopkeeper replied, "I'm sorry sir, but we only have one dozen left. May I recommend some of these luscious ferns we just got in. I think they'd make a beautiful arrangement all by themselves."

"You're right," the customer said, "With frondes like these, who needs anemones?"

Noah Webster's wife, returning from a long trip, discovered the lexicographer 'flagrante delicto' with a pretty chambermaid. "Mr. Webster!" she gasped. "I'm surprised!"

"No my dear" said Webster with a reproving smile, "You're shocked...I am surprised."

Aphorisms for our time

99 percent of lawyers give the rest a bad name.

Deja Moo: The feeling that you've heard this bull before.

The 2 most common elements in the universe are hydrogen and stupidity.

If at first you don't succeed, sky-diving is not for you.

If at first you don't succeed, destroy all the evidence that you tried.

To succeed in politics, it is often necessary to rise above your principles.

You never really learn to swear until you learn to drive.

Money can't buy love. But it CAN rent a very close imitation

Borrow money from pessimists—they don't expect it back.

How smart are you really?

Take the Idiot Test and find out

Scoring guide:

- 20 correct - Genius
- 17 correct - Above Normal
- 15 correct - Normal
- 8 correct - Nincompoop
- 6 correct - Moron
- 3 correct - Idiot

1. Do they have a 4th of July in England?
2. How many birthdays does the average man have?
3. Some months have 31 days; how many have 28?
4. A woman gives a beggar 50 cents; the woman is the beggar's sister, but the beggar is not the woman's brother. How come?
5. Why can't a man living in the USA be buried in Canada?
6. How many outs are there in an inning?
7. Is it legal for a man in California to marry his widow's sister? Why?
8. Two men play five games of checkers. Each man wins the same number of games. There are no ties. Explain this.
9. Divide 30 by 1/2 and add 10. What is the answer?
10. A man builds a house rectangular in shape. All sides have southern exposure. A big bear walks by, what color is the bear? Why?
11. If there are 3 apples and you take away 2, how many do you have?
12. I have two US coins totaling 55 cents. One is not a nickel. What are the coins?
13. If you have only one match and you walked into a room where there was an oil burner, a kerosene lamp, and a wood burning stove, which one would you light first?
14. How far can a dog run into the woods?
15. A doctor gives you three pills telling you to take one every half hour. How long would the pills last?
16. A farmer has 17 sheep, and all but 9 die. How many are left?
17. How many animals of each sex did Moses take on the ark?
18. A clerk in the butcher shop is 5'10" tall. What does he weigh?
19. How many two-cent stamps are there in a dozen?
20. What was the President's name in 1950?

Answers at bottom of opposite page

LIGHTBULB JOKES

Submitted by Robert Bateman



How many () does it take to screw in a light bulb?

Auto mechanics —

Two. One to screw in the wrong-sized bulb and one to replace the burned-out socket.

Nuclear engineers —

Seven. One to install the new bulb; and six to figure out what to do with the old one for the next ten thousand years.

Californians —

Four. One to screw in the bulb and three to share the experience.

Oregonians —

Six. One to screw in the bulb, and five more to chase off the Californians who have come up to share the experience.

New Yorkers —

None of your damn business.

Christian Scientists —

One. To sit and pray for the old one to go back on.

Jews —

Three. One to call the cleaning woman and two to feel guilty about calling the cleaning woman.

Jewish mothers —

None. No, it's okay, I'll sit in the dark.

Zen Masters —

Two. One to screw in the bulb and one not to screw in the bulb.

Teamsters —

Fifteen. You got a problem with that?

Country singers —

Four. One to screw it in and three to write about the old one.

Women with PMS —

24 ... Why 24? ... It just does, dammit!!

Feminists —

That's not funny!

A man stuck his head into a supermarket and called out, "Does someone in here own the Great Dane that's chained to a parking meter?"
A man in the checkout line yelled, "That's my dog, why?"
"Well, my dog just killed your dog."
"Killed my Great Dane?" the shocked man asked. "What kind of dog do you own?"
"A Chihuahua."
"How did a Chihuahua kill my Great Dane?"
"He choked on it."

One fine day, an Englishman, a Scotsman, and an Irishman walked into a pub together. They proceeded to each buy a pint of Guinness. Just as they were about to enjoy their creamy beverage, three flies landed in each of their pints and became stuck in the thick head.

The Englishman pushed his beer away from him in disgust.

The Scotsman fished the offending fly out of his beer and continued drinking it as if nothing had happened.

The Irishman picked the fly out of his drink, held it out over the beer and then started yelling, "SPIT IT OUT, SPIT IT OUT, YOU BASTARD!!"

Submitted by Julie Duffy

Rodney Dangerfield quotes

I come from a stupid family. My father worked in a bank. They caught him stealing pens.

I was so depressed that I decided to jump from the tenth floor. They sent up a priest. He said "On your mark"

My wife made me join her bridge club ... I jump next Tuesday.

I met the surgeon general ... He offered me a cigarette. When I played in the sandbox, the cat kept covering me up.

This morning when I put on my underwear I could hear the fruit-of-the-loom guys laughing at me.

I got myself good this morning too. I did my pushups in the nude; I didn't see the mouse trap.

Idiot Test Answers: 1. Yes 2. One 3. All of them (12) 4. The beggar is her sister. 5. He can't be buried if he isn't dead. 6. 6 7. No - because he is the North Pole so it is a polar bear. 11. 2 12. 50-cent piece and a nickel. (The other one is a nickel) 13. The match. 14. Half way. Then he is running out of the woods. 15. 1 Hour 16. 9 17. None - Noah took them on the ark. 18. Meat 19. 12 20. Same as it is now.



Can you boil WATER?

By Richard Blunt

Everyone has his or her own idea about how to make good soup. Soup is like people: sometimes it's good, sometimes it's just awful. My first professional mentor, Chef Sully, had a very simple and workable formula for making good soup. "Blunt," he would say with a serious face, "making a good soup is not complicated. There are only three essentials: a well-made broth, fresh raw ingredients, and a proven formula. With these and the ability to boil water, anyone can make a good soup."

Fresh ingredients and proven recipes—or formulas, as Sully put it—are easy to obtain. Supermarket produce bins and meat counters are stocked daily with everything necessary to make good broth and soup. Bookstore and library shelves are rich with books containing an endless variety of delicious soup recipes. However, many an excellent soup or broth is ruined when a cook does not understand how and when to use the various stages of a boil when preparing their favorite soup. This is surprising because the boiling point of water is unmistakably the most reliable and easy to recognize reference point in the kitchen.

As part of my first lesson in making soups and broths, Chef Sully taught me how to recognize the three primary stages of a boil. According to him good soup or broth was not possible unless the cook knew how to control the temperature of its liquid with precision during preparation. You can get a clear view of the different levels of boiling by trying the following simple exercise. It will take about 10 minutes of your time but it will show you everything you need to know about the various stages.

First place a small pot half filled with cold water on the stove over a medium heat. Watch carefully. As the water heats up, small bubbles will start forming on the bottom of

the pot. These bubbles will start slowly rising but not quite reaching the surface. This causes a sluggish movement of the water called a simmer, the first stage of boil.

As the heat increases, the bubbles start rising a little faster and will just barely break the surface of the water. This is stage two, a gentle boil.

Beyond this, bubbles begin rapidly rising to, and vigorously breaking onto the surface. This is stage three, or a hard boil.

Boiling methods

Simmering is used to cook soup and stock for a long period of time to extract and blend the flavor of the ingredients. This type of slow cooking is necessary to prevent small particles from breaking off of the ingredients and emulsifying into the broth along with fat, causing a clear soup or broth to become cloudy. The gentle boil performs relatively the same function as the simmer, but will do it a little faster. When using a gentle boil, however, stay near the pot to keep an eye on it. A gentle boil can turn into a raging hard boil very quickly. I use the gentle boil to reduce the quantity of liquid and to concentrate flavors in broths only after the other ingredients have been strained out and the fat removed. The hard boil, in my opinion, has little use in soup or broth preparation. The vigorous activity caused by a rolling hard boil can seriously damage soup ingredients and turn a good soup or broth into an pot full of cloudy mush.

Preparing your broth

Most professional and home cooks will agree that the first and most important step in soup making is preparing a good broth. A broth is a liquid made from the slow simmering of



Richard Blunt

water containing meat or meat bones, fish or fish bones, and a few vegetables, herbs, and spices to extract and concentrate their flavor. Broths take time to prepare, but once started require little attention from the cook. I make a fresh batch of chicken broth every month and freeze it in pint containers. I also make brown meat broth and fish stock as needed.

In my article published in the January/February 1998 issue of *BHM*, I discussed making a basic chicken broth. In this article I will discuss making a rich tasting brown beef broth and an easy-to-prepare fish stock that will make you a fish soup and chowder lover forever. Then we'll make a soup from the beef broth and a chowder from the fish stock. Success with these recipes requires a clear, comfortable understanding of the simmering stage of boiling. If you are not sure, repeat the boiling water exercise until you are confident.

Basic meat broth

This formula can be used to make any type of meat broth. I have used beef, veal, and pork bones, but I never mix them in the same broth. Mixing different bones in the same broth adversely affects its flavor and color. If you are using beef meat and bones and want a brown broth with a more intense flavor and color, first brown the meat, bones, and vegetables in a 400° F oven for about a half hour or until they reach a medium golden brown. I don't believe that there is any benefit to browning veal or pork. The browning process masks the delicate and subtle flavor of these meats rather than enhancing them.

This broth takes about three hours to prepare, but as I mentioned above, once started it requires little attention. The trick is to set the heat so that the broth reaches a slow simmer. The liquid will be just bulging at the surface at slow simmer with no bubbles showing. When done, this

broth can be frozen and will remain in excellent condition for months. The following recipe yields about 2 quarts.

Ingredients:

2 lbs. meaty beef bones (fresh or frozen)
3 qts. cold water
1 lb. lean brisket or stew beef cut into cubes
2 medium carrots peeled and sliced
2 large unpeeled yellow onions, washed and cut into quarters
2 celery ribs, cut into chunks
pinch Kosher salt
1 unpeeled garlic clove
1 bay leaf
10 whole black peppercorns
2 whole cloves
½ tsp. dried thyme

Method:

1. Put the meat, meat bones, and water into a deep soup kettle that will readily hold all the ingredients. Place the kettle over a low heat and let the water heat. It is not necessary at this point to boil the water. In about 45 minutes a scum will start to form on the top as the water heats. Remove the scum as it forms. From this point on, do not stir the kettle.

2. The scum will continue to form for about a half hour. When it stops forming, adjust the heat and bring the broth to a simmer for about an hour.

3. Add the vegetables along with a pinch of salt, raise the heat to a medium low, and bring the mixture back to a slow simmer. Adjust the heat as necessary to maintain the simmer. The addition of the vegetables will create more scum on the surface, which should be skimmed off as it rises.

4. When the scum stops forming, add the garlic clove, bay leaf, peppercorns, whole cloves, and thyme. Again, adjust the heat to maintain the broth at a slow simmer. Continue simmering for a least three hours or until the stock reaches the desired flavor intensity.

5. When finished, ladle the stock through a triple thickness of moistened cheese cloth. Cool the stock, uncovered as quickly as possible. One way to do this is to place the pot in a sink filled with cold water, changing the water as necessary until the broth is cooled.

6. Refrigerate the amount of stock that you intend to use within 24 hours and freeze the rest.

Senate bean soup

The wonderful aroma of a fresh, homemade soup or chowder was a constant surge from my mom's small but busy kitchen. Her demanding work schedule left her little time to prepare multicourse meals. But she made the best use of that time by preparing a wide variety of one-dish meals. Hearty, protein-rich soups and chowders served with

fresh crusty breads, vegetable salads, and a variety of cheeses were my favorites. Senate bean soup is a thick, filling soup that met all of my mom's requirements for nutrition and heartiness. Her version of this great soup contains white turnip or rutabaga, depending on which one was available in the market. This is an addition that foils its authenticity but, in my opinion, adds a nice flavor touch. She also made it with plain water and let the soup form its own stock while cooking. I prefer to include a portion of meat broth to give the soup added richness. However you make this soup, with or without broth, I'm sure you'll find it satisfying for lunches or dinners that require a filling protein-rich food.

Ingredients:

1 lb. dried Great Northern or navy beans
8 cups cold water to soak the beans
3 smoked pork hocks
2 qts. cold water to cook with
1 qt. meat broth
1½ yellow onions, chopped fine
2 cloves fresh garlic, minced
1 cup rutabaga, peeled and diced fine
1 cup celery, diced fine
1 cup plain, fresh mashed potatoes
¼ tsp. fresh ground black pepper
1 tsp. chopped green onions (without the white part) to be used as a garnish

Method:

1. Combine the beans with the soaking water and soak them for 12 hours or overnight.
2. Drain the beans, discard the soaking water and rinse with plenty of fresh water.
3. In a large soup kettle (five-quart minimum size) combine the beans, smoked pork hocks, cooking water, and meat broth. Bring the mixture to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer the beans for 1½ hours. Skim off any scum that rises to the surface.
4. Add the onions, garlic, rutabaga, celery, and mashed potatoes to the pot and continue to simmer the soup for another hour or until the beans are tender.
5. Remove the pork hocks from the soup, dice the meat, discard the bones and return the diced meat to the pot.
6. Serve the soup directly from the pot into heated bowls and garnish with the diced green onion.

Fish stock or fumet (pron. foo-may)

A rich fish broth is the secret of making a good fish chowder or soup. It is simple to make, taking only about an hour to cook. My mom made a batch of fish stock whenever I returned from a successful fishing trip. Some flesh always remains on the fish bones and head after filleting, and she

would never let this go to waste. She would simply remove the fins and tail from the frame and the gills from the head. Removing the gills was important because if left on they made the stock bitter. She would then combine the cleaned and washed frames with a few simple ingredients, simmer the mixture for about an hour, and strain the liquid through cheese cloth. Usually she would end up with about a quart of broth. This was just enough to make one of her great fish chowders. If you have never made a fish chowder from fresh-caught fish and homemade fish stock, give the following two recipes a try. If you appreciate good chowder you will find the reward well worth the effort. This recipe yields about two quarts.

Ingredients:

2 lbs. fresh fish frames and heads with the gills removed
4 ribs celery with the tops coarsely chopped
1 large yellow onion, peeled and coarsely chopped
pinch kosher salt
½ tsp. lemon juice
1 cup dry white wine (optional)
2½ qts. water
1 peeled garlic clove, crushed
1 bay leaf
4 whole black peppercorns

Method:

1. Rinse the fish frames and head in cold water to remove any slime. Chop the frames into two- or three- inch lengths.
2. Combine the washed fish frames and heads with the remaining ingredients in a stock pot that will hold all of the ingredients readily. Bring the mixture to a boil, lower the heat to a point where the stock comes to a simmer. Simmer the stock for one hour, carefully skimming off any scum that appears on the surface.
3. Remove the pot from the heat and let the stock rest for 30 minutes. Strain the stock through a triple fold of moistened cheese cloth. Strip any cooked flesh from the bones and head before you discard the bones. Save this treasure and add it to your chowder
4. Cool the stock quickly, using the cold water bath method, then refrigerate or freeze it until ready to use.

Fish chowder

The secret to good chowder is a rich stock and fresh fish. My mom would only make this chowder when she had both. She used mainly pollack and cod because they were inexpensive and they were the fish most often given to her by our neighborhood fishermen. I have also made this chowder with freshwater bass, catfish, perch, and other firm-fleshed, nonoily fish. My mom also used salt pork in her recipe to give her chowder that "Cape Cod" flavor. Cholesterol and I don't get along very well, so I have sub-

stituted vegetable oil. If salt pork is a must for you, replace the oil in the recipe with four ounces of diced salt pork. Sauté the salt pork with a little water until it becomes opaque. Remove it from the pan and set it aside. Add it to the chowder when you add the diced fish.

Ingredients:

3 lbs. firm-fleshed white fish, cut into one inch pieces
2 Tbsp. peanut oil or any oil of your choice
3½ cups yellow onions, diced medium
2 pounds potatoes, peeled and diced
1 qt. fresh fish stock
2 Tbsp. butter or margarine
2 Tbsp. all purpose flour
1 qt. whole milk
Kosher salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Method:

1. In a large skillet, heat the oil over a medium heat. Add the onions and sauté them until they are light brown.
2. Combine the onions, potatoes, and fish stock in a pot that will hold all of the ingredients comfortably. Set the pot over medium heat and bring the mixture to a gentle boil.

Reduce the heat until the mixture reaches a slow simmer. Continue to cook the mixture until the potatoes are done

3. While the above mixture is cooking, start a roux by melting the butter or margarine over a medium heat in a small pan. Stir in the flour and cook this mixture for about two minutes, stirring constantly. This roux should be a pale brown when ready.

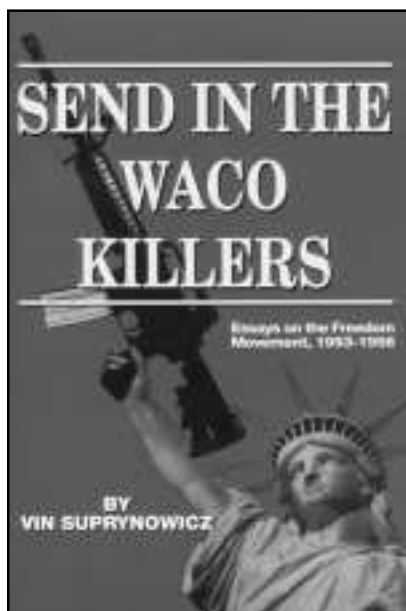
4. Remove the roux from the heat and let it cool for a minute or two, then gently stir it into the mixture in the pot.

5. Add the fish pieces to the pot and cook slowly for about 10 minutes, or until the fish is just cooked. Remove the mixture from the heat.

6. When you are ready to serve the chowder, place the pot over a medium heat, add the milk, and heat the mixture through, gently. Do not let the chowder boil.

One final word on preparing consistently great soups and chowders. Soup and chowders should never be a dumping ground for tired old ingredients that can't be used any other way. Take pride in your soups and always use the freshest ingredients available. By selecting soup ingredients with a discriminating eye, and always using good fresh stock, your soups will always be satisfying to make and eat. Δ

SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS



Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, Send in the Waco Killers, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

If you read no other book this year, read Send in the Waco Killers. Just keep your blood pressure medication handy. 506 pages, trade paperback, \$21.95 + \$3 S&H.

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There's money in wild mushrooms — but only if you know what you're doing

By Tom Mysiewicz

There could be big bucks in wild mushrooms on your back 40. However, the few articles I've

seen about making your fortune in wild mushrooms are, to put it mildly, sadly out of date or just plain mistaken. For instance, they tell you how Matsutake or Pine Mushrooms (*Tricholoma*

magnivalarie) sell for \$300/lb. for the Number 1 grade. The price hasn't been that high since 1992. In fact, it averaged about \$8/lb. and went as low as \$4/lb. this past season (possibly because the Red Army in China shipped some two million pounds to Japan in September 1997).

You can make money in wild mushrooms, but only rarely will you be able to make substantial money. And it's a different ballgame from what it was five years ago. For one thing, there are 500-1000 hard-core Cambodian and Laotian pickers that, based on what I've seen this year, will gladly keep picking even at 75-cents per pound. Many of these individuals are on some form of public assistance and, quite frankly, view mushroom money as some spending cash rather than their sole means of support.

As a homesteader, you first need to determine what your goals are.

Mushrooms as a primary income source

Do you need a main source of income? If so, you'll want to forego

picking most times (except when prices are high.) If the price paid by wild mushroom buyers is 50% or better of the wholesale price, which you can determine by calling around to fresh produce markets and produce buyers, you may be better off picking and leaving the

transportation, marketing, and collection headaches to the big boys. In recent years, however, the gap between what pickers are paid and the price paid at the wholesale level has gotten to 200% or more. This means that your best opportunities could be in marketing.

Start out within a 200-mile radius of your homestead. Contact gourmet restaurants, gourmet shops, and fresh produce markets. Offer them a good deal on whatever quality wild mushrooms are in season. Initially, you can pick the mushrooms to help absorb the costs of starting a business relationship. Try to get paid in cash up

front or, if the business is established, take a purchase order with as short a payment period as possible (say 10-20 days net).

Once you have some established customers, you can begin purchasing direct from other pickers and market their products as well, and you can purchase and ship from other areas when the mushroom bloom moves on. (The author will be glad to help you find suppliers if demand outstrips your supply). It's best to try and deliver the mushrooms in person at first so if the buyers have any complaints about the quality you'll know sooner rather than later. Bugs, fungus infestations, and soggy mushrooms are generally not looked kindly upon. Be sure to keep mushrooms cool with ventilation, such as that provided by plastic mushroom baskets or leeches. Start out small at first. When you learn what the mushrooms can and cannot take (and this varies by species) you'll be more comfortable using air freight and other methods.

If you're marketing dried mushrooms (see sidebar) you can often visit restaurants' back doors and sell direct-



A typical mushroom buyer with ready cash in hand. Steve, who buys by Oregon's Sixes River for a Portland company, is responsible in that he uses an electronic scale. Basket is tared before weighing mushrooms.



The author sold three of seven baskets of hedgehogs shown here. After severe Pacific storms, it was a slow day for the buyer and many "shroomers" had a hard time getting into mushrooms.

ly to the head chef. The good thing about driers is that they can keep for up to two years if properly prepared and kept dry (a sealed plastic bag and food-grade silica gel pack help).

Farmers' markets are yet another way to market wild mushrooms directly to the public. Several individuals make a living doing this in Southern California twice weekly and driving up to Oregon to buy mushrooms from pickers in between.

Other Ideas I've heard about, but have not tried commercially, are canning, pickling, and smoking wild mushrooms for the gourmet market. Check with your local food-safety officials to determine if any special licenses or permits are required.

Supplemental income from wild mushrooms

If you're looking for some extra cash and not a main income source, picking wild mushrooms and selling them for cash to mushroom buyers is probably your best way to go. But don't do it all the time or you will lose rather than make money.

Be sure to keep your accounting pencil handy. I think a figure of 32-cents/mile is about right for calculating repair, fuel and insurance costs for your vehicle. So if you have to drive a total of 100 miles round trip to pick and sell, you will have a fixed cost of \$32. Partners can help defray this cost. Don't be tempted to underestimate repairs. Mushrooming puts wear and tear on a vehicle that's hard to equal.

Find out the price being paid by the buyers and determine what you can pick—10, 20, 40, or even the accomplished 100 pounds per day. At \$2/lb., you would have to be able to pick about 40 lb./day to make picking worthwhile. Pay attention to local price trends and speak to other pickers about previous days' prices.

In dealing with buyers, you'll want to do and watch out for the following:

- **Prices.** High prices paid on Friday that are halved on Saturday when all the weekend pickers have rushed out to pick. Monday through Wednesday are usually the best days to sell. Avoid picking before major holidays as the big mushroom companies don't want to sit on stock that might spoil.
- **Inaccurate scales.** Get yourself a reasonably accurate digital scale and pre-weigh your product before selling to a buyer. I'm not saying there is dishonesty but, let's face it, in-the-field scales (especially the spring variety) get banged around and can be off by quite a bit. Remember that the typical mushroom basket weighs a bit over one pound, and you need to tare so that the scale reads "0" when an empty basket is on it.
- **Grading.** With many mushrooms, grade can make a big difference in what you are paid. Always take back rejected or lowgrade mushrooms just in case the buyer is tempted to believe that some mushrooms can always be regraded "later." With King Boletes (*Boletus edulis*) and Matsutake watch out for dirty knives. Buyers cutting mushrooms to look for worms (which make the mushroom worth 50 cents/lb. instead of \$8-plus) sometimes accidentally leave worm-like marks. I always take back "wormies" to put in new spots or to eat after soaking in salt water.



*Cutting Black Trumpets (*Craterellus fallax*) from a mossy patch. Leaving "root" balls in the ground helps preserve patch for future years.*

- **Buyer hype.** I've been in places where I've barely made enough to pay my gas money out of the miserable place, but when I hear buyers talk I have to ask myself if I hadn't been asleep in the greatest mushroom spot ever. There is only one way to find out if a spot will pay and that is to go there and see for yourself. Obviously, buyers want as many pickers as possible because they get paid by the pound they buy. In places like La Grande, one frequently sees 3000 to 4000 pickers bringing in 10 lb./day each—poverty wages—while buyers speak glowingly of 40,000-lb. day.
- **Selling.** Selling to the same buyer without checking prices. Often, when you are new, a buyer will pay you extra by skipping his commission. If you do not pay attention and assume you are always getting the high price, you may find that you've given back several times the original bonus. Tell your buyer up front that you expect to get the going price. A good buyer will even pay you extra if he has to go higher in price later in the day, after you have sold.

Caution signs to look out for: buyers running out of baskets, buyers running out of money, buyers closing early or not opening and buyers on quotas. These are all reliable signs that a market is topping out and a price drop is at hand. Don't be caught hanging on to several days worth of mushrooms (which you'll sometimes want to do when prices are rising) in this environment.

Finding buyers

Where can you find wild-mushroom buyers? On the West Coast, they'll be found in Willits, Calif. (Matsutake, Black Trumpets and Hedgehogs from Dec. through February); Ft. Bragg, Calif. (same); Crescent City, Calif. (same plus King Boletes, Yellow Chanterelles and Yellowfoot Chanterelles from September through March); Coos Bay, Ore. (same plus Lobsters); Florence, Oregon (same); Astoria, Oregon (same); Shelton, Wash. (Yellow Chanterelle and Matsutake from August through Sept.); and, Forks, Wash. (same).

Heading inland and south, you can find buyers at Randle, Wash. (Yellow Chanterelle and Matsutake, Aug. through Oct.); Portland, Ore. (see below); Eugene, Ore. (see below); Sisters, Ore. (King Boletes in May-June, Matsutake from Sept. through Oct.); and La Grande and Ukiah, Ore. (Morels in April through June, King Boletes through Summer).

Three major mushroom buyers who can tell you where their buyers are and quote current prices, as well as buying direct, are:

(1) Cascade Mushroom Co., 223 SE 3rd Ave., Portland, OR 97214, (503) 233-5881, Contact: Matthew Briggs.

(2) Smith's Forest Fresh Products, 4716 NE 97th Ave., Portland, OR 97220, (503) 254-0164, Contact: Arlee Smith.

(3) Pacific Mushrooms Inc., 2606 Roosevelt Blvd., Eugene, OR 97402, (541) 688-5645, Contact: John Barnes. Δ

Identifying, picking, and drying major commercial wild mushroom species

If you've never picked wild mushrooms before, stop here. You should first get yourself a decent mushroom guide such as that published by the National Audubon Society. Next, get together with an experienced mushroom picker or buyer and actually look at the mushrooms you plan to pick. After you have picked some, bring them back and double check. With species such as morels and chanterelles, any professional chef should be able to help you with a positive I.D. Other good resources are local mushroom clubs and mycological societies. Frequently, these sponsor field and collecting trips.

Please note that the descriptions given here are for general information and should not be relied on for a conclusive identification, in lieu of the advice given above.

Of the more than 5000 wild mushroom species found in North America, only a few percent are poisonous.

The **Matsutake** or **Pine** (*Tricholoma magnivalarie*) is found from Hyder, Alaska down through South America. It frequents firs and pines at high altitudes and tan oaks at lower elevations. Randle, Washington, Crescent Lake, Oregon, and Willits, California, are some of the most productive areas from September through January. This mushroom is white in color with a brownish fluff on top of some specimens. The number 1 grade is a tight bud with no gills showing and the veil connecting the cap and stem unbroken. The mushroom smells like cinnamon and is quite aromatic.

As the mushroom grows above ground level and gets a small break in the veil, the grade declines to number 2. Less than a 50% break is a number 3. Flags are number 4 and 5 grades. Prices have ranged from \$500 to \$4/lb. for number 1 grade mushrooms, but price activity in recent years and growing input from China and North Korea may mean prices will stay below \$50/lb. level for the foreseeable future.

The **Morel** (*Morchella* family) is a good starting point. It looks like an



A healthy Lobster is sometimes harder to find than you might think. Even though bright red or orange they often grow under moss for a considerable period and can sometimes only be seen looking uphill.

oval brain on a smooth stem that is shorter than the head. It is hollow inside and resembles a sponge. Burnsite morels are found in abundance in some areas in which there was a fire the previous year. In the West, morels

are often found in firs, madrone, and poison oak. In the Midwest and East, look in dead or diseased elms, ash, oak and maple groves. Prices (those paid to pickers) usually start out in late March at \$10 to \$15/lb. and quickly drop if supplies increase. By May, prices often fall to \$1-2/lb. before rebounding later in summer.

King Bolete (*Boletus edulis*) often follows the morel in late April through July (and in late fall on the coast). This mushroom also has no gills but a white sponge-like underside that later turns yellow as the mushroom opens. The cap is dome-shaped and is reddish, tan, or potato colored. The stem is fat looking like a pot-bellied stove. The underside should not stain red, blue or black when scratched. If it does, it's not a King. Price for Kings



Some late-season Yellow Chanterelles. These are the bread-and-butter of the coastal mushroom picker.

usually starts at \$10 to \$15 for the number 1 grade and go down to the \$1 to \$3/lb. range if the season is good. This mushroom, being one of the tastiest, is a worm magnet and you will have to learn to feel for them.

A summer mushroom is the **Lobster** (*Hypomyces lactifluorum*). It is funnel shaped, bright red or orange, has no gills, and is actually an *Agaricus* or *Lactarius* species that's been colonized by a parasitic fungus. North of Coos Bay, more frequent colonizations of poisonous species occurs, and care should be taken in identification. The mushroom is also found up the Columbia River and in Washington, in the Randle area. Prices for this crisp mushroom (that tastes like seafood when dried) range from \$8 to \$10/lb. early in the season to as little as 50-cents at the peak in a good year.

The **Black Trumpet** (*Craterellus fallax*) is found from September through March under tan oaks, oaks, or other deciduous trees where they grow in large clumps among the leaves. They are sometimes hard to spot being funnel shaped, black on the outside and black to gray on the underside. Trumpets can get up to 6-inches long and are not very thick. Prices usually starts out at \$6/lb. and, for the past several years, has declined to the \$1/lb. area (where it isn't really economical to pick).

Yellow Chanterelles (*Cantharelus cibarius*) are a major commercial

mushroom with a big following in Europe. The bulk of the harvest takes place from August through November, with prices opening in the \$7 to \$8/lb. range, dropping to as little as 75-cents/lb. at the peak of the season, and then back up to the \$4/lb. range as the season ends. These mushrooms are found in mid-to-old-growth coniferous forests and oaks throughout the U.S. On the West Coast, they're found

as far South as L.A. where—because of the tannic acid oak stains—they're called "mud chanties." Yellows are bright yellow or orange, funnel shaped, firm, have medium gills, (that look like they were etched into clay with a pencil) smooth (solid) stems, grow in large and scattered patches, and smell pleasant. If they have wide-spaced hanging gills, are crumbly, and smell bad, they're probably false chanterelles and are poisonous.

Hedgehogs (*Dentium repandum*) are smallish tan to tan-pink mushrooms with fat stems and packed-together "tooth" undersides that look like foam. The mushroom is slightly brittle and, when crumbled, the "teeth" fall out all over like little filaments. Hedgehogs used to be considered the bread and butter of the winter mushroom picker, paying \$3 to \$4/lb., but in recent years they've frequently been as low as \$1/lb. The mushrooms are quite tasty and used as a late-season chanterelle substitute. Best picking time for "hogs" is November through February.

Other miscellaneous commercial species include the cauliflower mushroom (*Sparassis crispa*) or wood lettuce (\$2 to \$8/lb.), Candy Cap (*Lactarius fragilis*) used as a maple-syrup substitute by bakers in bad maple years (\$2 to \$4/lb) and yellow-foot chanterelle (*Cantharellus infundibuliformis*) that are found near "hogs" and usually pay \$1 to \$2/lb. Δ

Drying wild mushrooms

Drying wild mushrooms can be a way to get extra value from wild mushrooms for the homesteader, particularly when prices are low. Morels, which dry at about an 8:1 ratio sell for \$40 to \$60/lb. dry—the higher amounts paid by chefs and end users. Chanterelles and black trumpets can sell for \$20 to \$35/lb. dry and dry at about an 11:1 ratio. Lobsters and boletes can also be sliced and dried and prices vary considerably depending on quality. A limited market exists for dry Matsutake—something not worth doing except for home use or for a specialty store.

Morels should be dried whole with stems cut as short as possible to prevent rehydration. Chanterelles should be pulled apart. Lobsters and boletes should be sliced 1/8-inch thick and spread out.

Indoors, a fan can be used with room temperature at 80 degrees F. Higher heat should not be used until the mushrooms are almost dry to prevent shriveling and discoloration. A wood stove is an excellent heat source and old window screens can be used as drying racks.

Outdoors, screens can be used or a tarp (mushrooms must be turned if there is no airflow below). There should be a breeze or some air movement. A tarp or sheet should be suspended over the mushrooms to protect them from rain and direct sunlight, which can cause discoloration.

Fully dry mushrooms should sound like poker chips. Use reclosable plastic bags or a vacuum sealer if you have one. A food-grade silica gel pack will ensure that residual moisture does not spoil your driers. If you have a small diet scale, you can weigh out packages in 1-lb. increments, which will facilitate sale. Δ

LONG TERM Food Storage

By Jackie Clay

chased at great sales at the market throughout the year.

You don't have to wait for nuclear war, depression, or some other doomsday scenario to get your family and home ready for bad times. There are floods, ice storms, droughts, power outages, and other "acts of God" around our country on any given week.

So, to avoid panic and discomfort, we know it is provident and wise to stock up on those items for not only survival, but reasonable comfort and happiness, should we need to live off what we have stored in our pantry, root cellar, basement, or attic.

Remember, hard times or other emergencies seldom, if ever, give advance warning.

Now, we know we should rotate the foods we store in order to have wholesome foods to choose from. But just how long are foods actually good?

Some items at the store have a "freshness date" and it is commonly believed that after that date the products will not be good. And even preparedness companies cite a shelf life of five years in their storable foods. Then along comes some strange per-

son, such as myself, who tells a different tale. As a long-time survivalist and home canner, with nothing to lose or



Tins and sealed jars hold dry foods such as beans, peas, corn, pasta, and seeds for future gardens.

gain from telling you anything but the truth, you might listen to my experiences.

I have always kept at least a two year supply of food stored against bad times, whether it be an illness, injury, loss of a job, storm, or worse. This is a practice I learned from my parents and grandparents who lived through and learned from the Depression. Every year I home-can hundreds of jars of food, most filled with home-raised produce and meat, some with meat from hunting, some with items pur-

In one year we canned two deer, a tremendous tomato crop in another, a bumper apple crop in yet another, and so on. I

always can all I am able, as in other years the crop may not be so good and the hunting may be sparse. In this way, my pantry leapfrogs, as we do not consume all of last year's canned food. So, through the years, the canned goods build and build, and despite rotating the shelves to try to use up the oldest, our supply

expands.

Likewise, other pantry supplies, bought from the stores, grows and grows as one great sale follows another.

Okay, the bottom line: Just how long will this stuff keep? Do I really have to throw it to the chickens after a year? Two years? Five years? The answer is one word.

No.

Canned goods

No matter what you read in canning books (the newer ones, of course), on labels, in magazines, and no matter

what your neighbor or friend tells you, canned foods will last nearly indefinitely.

Now, you *must* store all canned foods, including home canned foods, in a cool, dark, dry place for optimum shelf life. Storing them in hot, light conditions will sometimes result in changes in texture, color, and taste as well as hasten the breakdown of vitamins. (It is this breakdown in vitamins that most often gives the warning, which sounds so dire: *use before December 1999, etc.*)

It is true that most canned foods will lose some vitamin content. But if you've ever been hungry—I mean real hungry—you don't worry if the vitamin C in the canned tomatoes is below national standards. Besides, we figure we make up any vitamin shortfall with the fresh produce we eat nearly every day from the garden.

Storing canned foods in damp conditions, as often found in basements or root cellars, can shorten the shelf life, and sooner or later the cans and jar tops will rust, weaken, and the contents will spoil. If this is your only storage facility, be certain to use up any cans or tins that are beginning to rust before they go bad and always check such containers for mold, cloudiness, odor, or an unsealed or bulging condition. All indicate spoiled foods. Likewise, boil all vegetables or meats for 15 minutes to kill pathogens, even if not apparent. Just to be sure.

I have home-canned jars of food that are at least 20 years old, which we use from time to time. For instance the cherries we picked from Dad's orchard, which we parcel out frugally until we get our own trees bearing. These foods taste, smell, and look great, despite their age. Plenty good for an emergency situation, for sure.

Dry goods

Okay, let's move on to the more nebulous items, such as dry goods, like flours, dry milk, sugar, etc. Will



A full pantry is great insurance.

all of these store indefinitely as well? Yes and no, depending on the product. Let's start with those that have an extremely long shelf life, given good storage practices. By this I mean kept dry, sealed, and stored in a fairly cool, dry, dark location.

Beans, dry peas, wheat, and other dry grains, unprocessed, will keep in storage a long, long time. I have some beans that are more than 700 years old, and they still germinate and grow.

You know I could eat them, if I wanted to. But, of course, I don't as they are treasures from the past.

Because these grains store so long, it is best to store whole grains, including corn, and grind them as needed. For once they are ground, the shelf life decreases, often dramatically. Take whole wheat flour and corn meal for instance. Both of these products can become rancid after a period of from two weeks to a few years, because of the oils in them.

White flour from the store has been "processed," which removes the oily germ and, of course, much of the nutrition. Therefore, it will store for a much longer time than will whole wheat flour. My grandmother did not like to use fresh white flour, preferring to use older flour as it baked better.

Right now, I'm using a bin of six-year-old white flour, and it is fine. I do sift it twice to fluff it up because when it sits in the bag for a long time, it settles and packs together. Without the extra sifting, it bakes pretty solid biscuits and bread. Corn meal will usually last, unrancid, for about a year or two in a sealed glass jar.

Other than dampness, a bag of flour or grain's worst enemy is the meal moth. This little bugger is a small, nondescript greyish moth who gets into our grain and lays eggs which hatch out into flour weevils, ruining the flour in a short time. The first sign of weevils are tiny dark specks in the flour, followed by webbing in the can or jar. The moths initially come into our pantry in a bag of flour with a small tear, hole, or unglued section of bag.

Always thoroughly check all new bags of flour or meal at the store, rejecting any that have a tiny leak. Taping the hole at the store is not a cure. Buy solid bags, and immediately get them into good, airtight storage. For long term storage, I put two 25-pound sacks in a good food grade garbage bag, stick a few bay leaves in for good measure, and seal the bag with duct tape. The bay leaves dis-

courage any moths that could possibly get into the sealed plastic bag. These sacks are then either stored in a clean garbage can or sturdy cardboard box, which is also taped shut when full.

I usually freeze five-gallon pails of whole grains in case some minute friends are hitching a ride in our food. The freezing kills them before they become a problem.

It is a very good idea to buy a package of meal moth lures/traps, which attract the moths before they attack your stored flours. The cost is minimal and they do afford good protection. These traps sit discreetly on your pantry shelf, trapping any moths that happen by.

Sugars will last indefinitely. They must be kept dry and sealed to prevent hardening. When I store brown sugar, I dampen a piece of folded washcloth and place it on top of the sugar, then seal the jar. This keeps the sugar from hardening, which is a problem with brown sugar. If a bag or jar of sugar does get hard or crumbly, it is still good, although a bit inconvenient. Just warm up the sugar and add it to the liquid in the recipe to soften it.

Dry milk, dry eggs, dry margarine and butter powder, cheese powder, and powdered cheese sauce are foods that keep very well, if unopened and well sealed. I buy dry eggs, powdered cheese, margarine, orange drink mix, and many other long-storage items from a preparedness company as they are sealed in #10 cans.

I've used some of these foods that were seven-years-old and older and all were perfectly fine. And I've used dry milk from the store which was well sealed and stored for 10 years on our pantry shelf. The milk smelled and tasted normal and resulted in great pancakes, rolls, and sauces.

Home dehydrated vegetables and dehydrated vegetables purchased from preparedness companies in #10 cans make an excellent lightweight, nutritious, long-term storage item. I dehydrate everything from sliced potatoes and corn to tomatoes and peppers.



The author picks some cukes for pickles to add to the pantry.

Perfectly dried and securely sealed, they will last for years.

I buy two one-pound foil bags of granulated dry yeast at a time. One I open and pour into a jar, which is stored in the fridge. The other is stored, unopened, in the freezer compartment of the fridge. As yeast only keeps a shelf life of about a year, unrefrigerated, I rotate this yearly, using the frozen yeast to replace the one in the refrigerator at the end of the year and buying a new one for the freezer. But, in an emergency, one can always use a bit of this old yeast or even develop wild yeast to make a sourdough starter.

Salt will keep forever if stored with care.

Baking powder will keep well a long time if stored properly. In fact, the can of Rumford I'm using now was purchased five years ago and it just sits on my shelf. And if it starts to weaken, you can just add a bit more or boost it by adding warm liquid to the mix. Baking soda lasts even longer. I'm using some off the pantry shelf that is nine, count 'em, nine years old. And no one has ever whined about my cooking.

More perishable foods

How about more perishable foods? When we lived on our remote homestead in Montana's high country, we were snowed in for at least six months out of the year, so preparation was a must. We learned that we could stick frozen stick margarine in a cooler we placed in a snowbank and have it last all winter. Unfrozen but refrigerated margarine would keep for about two months, then begin to pick up odors and tastes. We learned that tubs of margarine would keep for nearly all winter in a cold spot on the floor of our pantry, but we did need to protect it from not only our cats and an occasional mouse, but from the dogs as well. Butter lasts a much shorter time, unless kept strictly frozen.

Shortening, bought and kept sealed, will last many years before going rancid. I have used some that was 7 years-old, and it was fine.

Eggs are a big joke with us. Many folks insist on "fresh" eggs, throwing out those a few weeks old. I worked part time for an egg ranch. The fresh eggs were picked up weekly, hauled to a warehouse where they were distributed to wholesale companies, who kept them around awhile before trucking them to super markets where they were finally bought. How much time elapsed? Who knows?

We raise our own chickens but before we snowmobiled our day-old chicks up the mountain one April we had to buy eggs for the winter. We found that if we bought really fresh eggs from a rancher in November, we'd have good eggs in May. I did crack them into a cup, as an occasional one would be bad.

You can waterglass your eggs, but a crock full of those eggs is nasty to reach into. Kind of like dipping into snot for breakfast eggs. It takes your appetite away and it is a bit costly.

We found that keeping the eggs boxed in the fridge or cold corner of

the pantry was sufficient to keep them all winter. All eggs to be stored should be carefully inspected for even the most minute cracks as it can allow bacteria to penetrate the egg.

Without a flock of chickens to depend on, it is a good idea to have several #10 cans of powdered eggs on hand to be available in an emergency.

Just a note: home-raised eggs, fresh from the hen, are fine unrefrigerated for many days. I've found hidden nests in the weeds with eggs that have not been sat on by the hen yet, and though they sat out in 90° weather for as much as a week, I used them, finding every one was like it was fresh from the hen.

Meats and meat substitutes

Unless your family is vegetarian, meats in storage is necessary. No, I do not mean in the freezer, as no matter what "bad times" entail, the first thing to go is the power. Lose a job, get injured, not enough to pay the power bill, storms, earthquakes, fires, floods—all can quickly zap the power. While there are steps you can take to keep a freezer from thawing out quickly, they are not enough for a long-lasting emergency.

I have home canned meat for years, and found it extremely easy, quick, and convenient. Any canning book can help you get started today. This meat, including stews, soups, sauces, fish, poultry, and wild game will keep indefinitely if properly stored in that dark, dry, cool pantry.

Want to store meat before you get that two years' supply of home-canned meat on your shelf? Just look on your supermarket shelves. There's a lot to choose from: tuna, salmon, hash, chicken, ham, sauces, beef, and even bacon. For long-term storage I try to stay away from those convenient "pop tops" with a handy pull ring. They are nice, but can easily get unsealed in the hustle and rush of an emergency. You have to handle and



Another load of canned goods for the pantry

pack them very carefully, or the weakened area that pops can be poked, unsealing them, often without a sign it has happened. Yes, our family does have Spam on the shelves of our pantry, but I handle it very carefully. Soups, stews, canned spaghetti, and so forth, purchased from the store shelves, will also last indefinitely, if kept dry to prevent rusting.

Jerky? Well, to tell the truth, few people ever dry it long enough for safe, dependable long-term storage without canning it as well. In many climates, the meat goes bad or begins to mold in as little as two weeks without refrigeration. If it is dried to a brittle stick, it will keep longer, but it is like chewing on a piece of rawhide. Indians did it, but they were much less fussy than today's urban population.

A popular meat substitute that is lightweight, nutritious, tasty, and long keeping is a product called TVP (textured vegetable protein). You probably best recognize it as the bacon-bits that aren't really bacon. We keep about 15 pounds in factory sealed #10 cans or aluminum bags in our pantry. As most recipes only need about a quarter cup, you can see these lightweight crumbles last a long time.

They come in several flavors: chicken, beef, bacon, ham, and even taco. I've found that keeping several jars of dried soup base next to the TVPs makes a nice couple. Simply adding

the flavored soup base to soup, noodles, or whatever, then tossing in the matched TVP, makes a very quick, lightweight, satisfying, and *cheap* dinner, even on the go.

Snacks for storage

Okay, I know goodies may get raised eyebrows, but they sure make an emergency less depressing. Unfortunately, potato chips and other "normal" snacks are primarily grease which turns rancid pretty quickly. But there are still a lot of snacks out there perfect for the pantry. On the top of our list is home-dried fruit. I dry about as much as I can and have gallon jars of dried apples, apple bits, peaches, peach bits, strawberries, pineapple, apricots, pears, and more. I have 10-year old dried apples in a test jar and I've pulled out a few to nibble on each year for five years now. They are a bit brown, but still very tasty. (You can bet now I'm going to try Robert Williams' dried watermelon slices too—*BHM July/August 1998*). These dried fruits can either be eaten as a great snack, added to mixes such as pancake or muffin, or rehydrated and eaten soft and juicy.

Don't have a dehydrator yet? While you shop or build, you may want to consider dried fruit from the store. While quite expensive, it is readily available and there are good choices:



Shelves full of food. l to r: dried apple slices, pickles, onion bits, tomato sauce, peaches.

apples, prunes, raisins, cranberries, strawberries, apricots, pineapple, and more. The down side is that most are heavily laden with sugar, but they are light and tasty.

Jello and instant pudding mixes are another long-term storage goody. Lasting indefinitely, they make a great snack, treat, or reward.

Dried beverages, whether they be coffee, tea, or powdered drink mixes, all store well, even in very long-term plans. It is best, as in all the other above items, to rotate your stock, because powdered drinks, especially, have a tendency to cake. Of course they are still usable, but it doesn't take much to use the old stuff as you go and replace it with new.

Nuts and sealed packages of sunflower seeds make another great storage snack. They will usually last several years, factory sealed or home canned. Otherwise, they will become as rancid as those opened holiday salted nuts. I can a variety of nuts at home, especially walnuts and pecans from friends' orchards.

Search stores and preparedness catalogs for other snacks that sound good to you. A person can always experiment (before spending money stocking up on an item) with just about any food.

MREs? For those of you who are uninitiated, MRE stands for "meals ready to eat," a meal in a pouch developed for the military, with no cooking necessary. Here I'll put myself on the firing line and say they just plain cost

too much for this frugal person. They taste fairly good—about like a TV dinner—are reasonably nutritious, are certainly fast and easy to grab and run with, but they are expensive and heavy if you have to carry them.

However, their shelf life is quite good. It is claimed that they will store for five years, but I'd suspect quite a bit longer if kept away from heat. But, for the cost of an MRE to feed one person, I can fix a meal—a real meal where you get filled up—for four people, even in the boonies.

So there you have it—the truth according to Jackie on long-term food storage. Try it yourself and find out how creative your family can be. Mine certainly is.

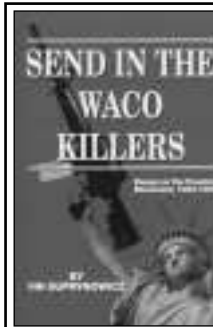
Just remember these tips:

- 1. Keep food cool, dark, and dry.
- 2. Make sure the food is factory or home-sealed as well as it can be.
- 3. Rotate all storage food regularly, marking the date on which you entered each item into the pantry. Use the oldest first.
- 4. Don't be afraid to experiment.
- 5. Have fun.

After all, it's a real joy and very reassuring to know that your family can get by nearly any period of bad times, eating good, nutritious food that they enjoy. Δ

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SEND IN THE WACO KILLERS

Three times the International Society of Newspaper Editors has included Vin Suprynowicz in their list of the 12 top weekly editorial writers in North America. For years his shoot-from-the-hip style has opened the eyes of thousands to government abuse of our liberties. In this book, *Send in the Waco Killers*, he blends material taken from his syndicated column with new commentary to give the reader a detailed, reporter's-eye-view of how the rights and freedoms of Americans are being subverted.

He uses factual accounts from the daily news to show how the Feds use the drug war, the public schools, jury rights, property rights, the IRS, gun control, and anti-militia hysteria to increase its power and control over us. He details how agents of the ATF and FBI have routinely lied, how they use paid informants to infiltrate Constitutionally-protected militia groups, then fabricate evidence to get arrests and discredit them.

Had he lived 225 years ago he'd have written a book to detail how King George III and Parliament have tried to enslave us but, sadly, this book is about how our government today is depriving us of our freedoms and ruining the lives of thousands without changing even one word of our Constitution.

If you read no other book this year, read *Send in the Waco Killers*. Just keep your blood pressure medication handy. 506 pages, trade paperback, \$21.95 + \$3 S&H.

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Try these tasty solutions to those problem critters around the homestead

By Scott Matthews

It seems there's no end to the problems that wildlife can cause on a homestead. A fox or coyote can clean out a henhouse in just a few nights, a family of raccoons will eat or destroy every ear of sweet corn in a small patch almost overnight, groundhog holes can cripple valuable livestock, and muskrats can perforate a pond dam 'til it holds water about as well as a burlap bag.

What's a homesteader to do? He could try repellent scents, visual and audible deterrents, fences, dogs, even live trapping and relocation. Most of them work sometimes, but none of them work all the time. I once relocated the same opossum four times in two weeks. He kept returning to our henhouse and fattening up on our eggs until opossum season opened up and I found a more permanent solution to the problem.

Can't beat 'em? Eat 'em!

That's right, we ate him. These days when you say, "meat," most people automatically think of beef, pork, chicken, or fish. Not so, even as recently as the 1940s, when many families depended on wild game to supplement the garden vegetables they raised and the wild plants they foraged. As kids, my parents not only ate wild meat, they thrived on it.

Today, scientists tell us that wild game is more nutritious and lower in fat than most domestic meats.

Oh sure, as a boy growing up in Southeast Missouri, I ate lots of doves, rabbits, and squirrels that I shot while out hunting. Still it was with



some trepidation that I tried that first opossum. I admit, I thought about just tossing the carcass into the nearest gully for the buzzards, but my frugal (some would say tightwad) homesteader's mind rebelled at the idea of wasting something that I knew was edible.

Since that time, I have tried several different species of animals and many wild game recipes. I've found that, with a little care and the right recipe, just about any kind of wild game can be a tasty addition to our table fare.

Here are a few of my favorite recipes with some suggestions as to what animals to try them on.

If you're still a little reluctant to try them, just remember, the first person who tried to eat a lobster was probably thought a fool. But look what a reward he got.

General cleaning

Skin as you would any game animal. Remove the scent glands (also called kernels). These are located in the small of the back and under each foreleg of most species and are bean shaped. If they aren't there, don't worry about it. Some critters, such as beavers, muskrats, and, of course, skunks, also have scent glands in the pelvic area. Be careful not to pierce any of these glands as they are strong smelling and can ruin the taste of the meat.

Strip off all excess fat as wild game fat holds much of the "gamey" flavor so many folks dislike. Gut the critter and wash with clear, cold water, inside and out. Remove any remaining hair which may be clinging to the meat.

Then try these recipes.

Braised groundhog

This one also works well with opossum, raccoon, or muskrat.

- 1 groundhog, cut into serving pieces
- 1¼ cup flour
- 3 tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. pepper
- ¼ cup bacon grease
- 1 pound white onions, chopped or sliced as per your taste
- 3 cups water
- 6 carrots, chopped or sliced
- 1 turnip, cubed

Mix flour with 2 teaspoons of salt and pepper. Dredge meat in mixture, then brown in the bacon grease in a large, heavy kettle over high heat. Remove the meat and set aside. Brown the onions in the kettle, then add the water and stir. Put the meat back in the kettle and add the carrots, turnip, and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover and simmer until tender (about 4 hours), or cover and bake in a 325°F oven, about 40 minutes per pound.

Coyote spread

The old Alaskan trapper that gave me this recipe said he used it with beaver, fox, bobcat, sheep, moose, caribou, bear, even—"slow or cantankerous sled dogs." My wife, Annie, tried it with a huge, old coyote that I took a couple years ago. We loved it. Several of my squeamish friends tried it and refused to believe that it was coyote. They didn't have any qualms about finishing all I had, though.

game meat, cut into chunks
mayonnaise
onion, chopped

Boil the meat chunks until tender, then grind. (Annie shredded it with a fork because we didn't have a grinder at the time.) Add the mayonnaise and chopped onion and mix as you would tuna fish. We ate it on Ritz crackers and loved every bite.

As a variation, you might substitute barbecue sauce for the mayonnaise. Next time we make it I want to try mixing in a little sweet pickle relish.

Pests under pressure

You can substitute a raccoon, opossum, groundhog, or two muskrats for the beaver.

1 small to medium beaver, cut into serving-size pieces
2 Tbsp. shortening
1 tsp. paprika
4 Tbsp. brown sugar
1 tsp. minced onion
2 Tbsp. lemon juice
1 cup water
20 stuffed olives, sliced
salt

Heat the pressure cooker. Salt the pieces of game. Place meat and shortening in pressure cooker and brown the meat. Combine the next five ingredients in a small bowl. Pour over meat. Sprinkle olives on top. Place the lid on the pressure cooker and cook at 15 pounds pressure for 20 to 25 minutes, depending on toughness and size of animal. Remove the meat from cooker and thicken gravy.

Varmint stew

This is a good general recipe that works with just about any type of game animal.

4 pounds wild game, cut into 2-inch pieces
salt and pepper
garlic salt
flour
1 large onion, chopped
3 Tbsp. cooking oil
6 potatoes, quartered
6 carrots, sliced
1 can stewed tomatoes

Salt and pepper the meat and dust it with garlic salt and flour. In a large skillet, brown the onions in cooking oil. Add meat and brown, then cover with water and add tomatoes. Simmer for one hour. Add potatoes, carrots, stewed tomatoes, and a little flour to thicken it and cook for about an hour longer. These recipes may not put an end to all of your critter problems, but they may make those occasional pests on the homestead a little more bearable. In fact, you may just find yourself looking forward to them with...uh, relish. Δ

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This year brew your own holiday beer

By Larry Cywin

One of the most interesting holiday treats is home brewed beer. While homebrewing was often a hit or miss proposition in years past, modern techniques, combined with readily available high quality ingredients, makes it a much simpler and surer thing. True, it can be very complex, but it doesn't have to be.

The general brewing process is very simple. It requires a minimum of equipment, most of which is commonly available.

3-5 gallon stainless or enameled pot
6.5 gallon glass carboy
5-10 gallon food grade plastic bucket, new
6 feet ³/₈-inch inner diameter clear plastic hose
fermentation lock
rubber stopper to fit carboy, with a hole for the fermentation lock
large plastic funnel
thermometer
hydrometer
bottles (60 12-oz. returnable, 50 20-oz. with bail top, 25 champagne bottles—don't use bottles with screw tops)
caps (for returnable and champagne bottles)
capper

Most of these items are already in the house; the rest are easily bought from local stores or mail order suppliers. The ingredients are fairly simple as well.

5-6 pounds of malt extract (this can be "hopped" or plain, light, medium, or dark in color)
5 gallons of water
1-2 oz. of hops (if using plain malt)
1 packet of ale yeast
³/₄ cup of corn sugar OR 1 ¹/₄ cup of dried malt extract (for bottling)

The process is simplicity itself.

Method:

1. Dissolve the malt extract (or extracts) in 1 ¹/₂ gallons of water.
2. Bring to boil, add hops (if called for) in cheesecloth bag and boil for 60 minutes. If using hopped malt, boil 15 minutes.



Backwoods Home Magazine senior editor John Silveira and publisher Dave Duffy are hard at work preparing this issue.

3. Sanitize the carboy with a bleach solution (1-2 oz. of bleach for 5 gallons of water). Rinse.
4. Add 3 gallons of water to carboy.
5. Add the hot malt and water mixture to carboy. (Remove hops first.)
6. When temperature reaches 78 degrees or below, measure specific gravity with hydrometer.
7. Add yeast.
8. Secure stopper and fermentation lock. Be sure to put water in lock.
9. Ferment 8-14 days.
10. Bottle according to the instructions below and cap.
11. Age 10 days.
12. Enjoy your homebrew.

Be aware that the single most important issue in homebrewing is sanitation. Beer is designed to grow bacteria

(yeast), and the wrong bacteria in your beer will produce incredibly nasty tastes and odors. In this basic case, boiling the extracts and water sanitizes them, and the weak bleach solution takes care of the fermenter. There is no possibility that the wrong bug will get into the beer.

The hydrometer, used to measure specific gravity, can be puzzling. Using plain water with an SG of 1.000, this device (it looks like a thermometer) can tell you how dense your brew is. The density is caused by sugars dissolved in the liquid, and the sugar is converted to alcohol. Generally speaking, the higher the starting SG, the more alcohol the beer will end up with.

Fermentation is obvious. Foam fills the top of the carboy. Gas (mostly carbon-dioxide) bubbles merrily out through the lock. This brew will technically be an ale and, therefore, should be fermented at 60 to 75 degrees. Since there is no advantage in aging the beer at these temperatures, it is fermented for up to 14 days. You can tell that the fermentation is done by two signs. First, the air lock stops bubbling. Second, the beer begins to look dark. The darkening is caused by the yeast settling out of the beer as it finishes its work. You'll note that the beer will darken from top to bottom.

Once fermentation is done, it is time to bottle the beer. First, sanitize your bottles, plastic bucket, and six feet of hose with bleach solution. Boil the bottle caps for 15 minutes. If you use bail type bottles, sanitize the rubber seals with the bleach solution.

Once everything is sanitized, get your carboy and put it on a table or counter. You will be using gravity to siphon the beer from the carboy, so it has to be higher than the bucket. Take the corn sugar or dried malt extract, boiled in some water, and pour it in the bucket.

The corn sugar is what will feed the living yeast in your beer, providing carbonation. Never use more than a cup of corn sugar or 1 ¼ cups of dried malt extract for each 5 gallons of beer. Too much sugar can result in over-carbonation and perhaps even exploding bottles.

Take the sanitized hose and fill it with water. Make sure there are no bubbles. The beer must be exposed to as little air as possible. Cover the ends of the hose with your fingers. Place one end of the hose in your carboy. Put the other end in the bucket. Remove your finger and let the beer flow. Do not let the beer splash, or get bubbly. Drain the carboy except for the last half inch. What will remain in the carboy is a sediment made up of spent yeast and various proteins, etc. that precipitate out of the brew during ferment.

Place the bucket on a table or counter, set your hose up again, and siphon your beer into bottles. Don't splash the beer. Leave an inch of airspace at the top of the bottle. Cap the bottles and label with the type and date. Store the bottled beer in a dark quiet place, with temperatures between 55 and 70 degrees. The beer in the bottles will begin to clear in about a week, as the yeast in suspension is spent carbon-

ating the brew. Carbonation is finished in no more than 14 days.

You should be aware that homebrew has a layer of sediment on the bottom of the bottle. While it is harmless, it can make the beer look muddy if stirred up. Therefore, it is best to chill the beer (which solidifies the sediment) and serve in a glass. The results are worth the extra effort.

Spice ale

Now that you have the basics of brewing, let's look at some holiday recipes. One traditional European speciality is spiced ale. Rather than mulling the ale (heating it while adding spices), spiced ale has the flavorings present during fermentation providing a more interesting range of flavors.

3.3 pounds of light malt extract
2 pounds of dark malt extract
2 pounds of wildflower honey
2 oz. of hops—Hallertauer or Fuggles
2-4 oz. of spices (fresh ginger-grated, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice)
ale yeast
corn sugar or dried malt for priming

Following the directions above, boil everything but the yeast in 2 gallons of water for 1 hour. Strain into the carboy, cool, add the yeast, lock it up, and let ferment. Prime and bottle.

Maple beer

In colonial times, maple syrup and maple sugar were common sweeteners. It was much cheaper than the imported sugar or molasses. Of course, it found its way into beer.

6 pounds malt extract (this can be light, amber, or dark)
1.5 oz. of hops (Hallertauer for lighter brews, Bullion for darker brews)
1 pint maple syrup
ale yeast
corn sugar or dried malt extract for priming

Boil all the ingredients for 1 hour, using half the maple syrup. Add the remaining syrup during the last minutes of the boil. Proceed as above for fermenting and bottling.

Pumpkin ale

Another colonial favorite was pumpkin. As the old song went, "We can make the liquor to sweeten our lips of pumpkin, of parsnips, of walnut-tree chips." A pumpkin beer would be especially appropriate for the holidays. However, the pumpkin requires some extra work.

6 pounds light or amber malt extract
10 oz. maple syrup
1.5 ounces of hops (Fuggles is fine)
3 pounds of processed pumpkin
7 tsp. of spices (cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, mace)
ale yeast
corn sugar or dried malt for extract priming

Boil the malt extract, maple syrup, hops, and pumpkin for 1 hour. Add the spices in the last 10 minutes of boiling. Strain, ferment, bottle.

Cranberry ale

Cranberries are a traditional holiday food and appear on the table in many forms. Here is one more.

6.6 pounds of pale malt extract
2 pounds of honey
1.5 oz. of hops (Hallertauer is fine)
2.5 pounds of cranberries
ale yeast
corn sugar or dried malt extract for priming

Crush the cranberries, then boil for 1 hour with extract, honey, and hops. Strain carefully (cranberry seeds are very small), ferment, and bottle.

Feel free to experiment with these recipes. Spices can be added or removed. The color of the malt (pale, amber, or dark) will change the character of the beer. Adding more or less hops, or using a different variety, will effect flavor and aroma. You can leave the hops out altogether and use a hopped malt extract. This makes it much simpler and quicker, since the long boil is to extract the bittering agents from the hops. Varying the yeast will also have an impact on flavor and quality. These three variables are enough to give any brewer room to experiment. One company offers 17 ale extracts, 54 unhopped extracts, and 18 different hops. That comes to almost 17,000 possible combinations. Granted, not all of them would be pleasant, but half the fun is in the exploring.

Supplies

Supplies are easy to find. There are literally hundreds of companies supplying beer making equipment. The magazine to read is *Zymurgy*, the journal of the American Homebrewer's Association. It covers homebrewing from the very basics to the most esoteric aspects such as breeding your own yeast strains. They also list local AHA chapters and suppliers. The address is P.O. Box 1679, Boulder, CO 80306-1679. *Brew Your Own* is another homebrew magazine. While not as exhaustive as *Zymurgy*, it is still worth a

look. The address is P.O. Box 1504, Martinez, CA 94553-0504.

There are two things to keep in mind about homebrewing. First, the AHA says, "It's not rocket science, unless you want it to be." Charlie Papazian, former editor of *Zymurgy*, and author of The New Complete Joy of Home Brewing, says, "Relax, don't worry, have a homebrew."

Thanks, I think I will. Δ

The trouble tree

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start.

While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence. On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands.

When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me. I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied. "I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again."

"Funny thing is," he smiled. "when I come out in the morning to pick em up, there ain't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

— Author Unknown
(submitted by Don Fallick)

Think of it this way...

By John Silveira

Would the United States be better off if it was officially a Christian nation?

An old friend of ours, Lyle, interrupted a vacation trip up the coast and came by with his new girl friend, Laura, to see our new digs—that's the new offices of *Backwoods Home Magazine* that are now located in Gold Beach, Oregon. Laura's a beautiful woman and the four of us, Dave Duffy—that's the guy who publishes this magazine, Laura, Lyle, and I were talking politics.

You know what I mean: we were talking about what's wrong with everyone else and why don't they see things our way. Except that our way was four different ways. Dave wanted to decriminalize everything that was a victimless crime. Lyle wanted more government control. I wanted to bring back the guillotine, the rack, chain gangs, and banishment for disobedient teenagers, which elicited laughs from everyone but 14-year-old Meaghan Silveira and 16-year-old Annie Duffy, who, as they walked out of the office door, gave me looks that should have at least left me limping. But last of all, and the most difficult position to argue with, was Laura's. She said problems would be solved if this were just a Christian country.

Apparently no one cared to argue with her. I said nothing, Lyle said nothing, and Dave said only, "That sounds a little idealistic."

And, suddenly, there he was, standing in the doorway with a grin on his face, a bucket in one hand and a bag in the other. It was O.E. MacDougal, our poker-playing friend from Ventura, California.

Dave looked at him, then at the bucket and asked, "What have you got there?"

"Anyone like steamers?" Mac asked. "You mean, steamed clams?" Dave asked.

"Yeah."

Dave and I crossed the office and looked and sure enough, the bucket had a bunch of freshly dug clams.

"Where'd you get those?" I asked.

"There's a beach and an ocean about 250 yards from here."

"You got them right out there?"

"No, a little further up north."

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

"How?" I asked.

He looked at me. "I used a shotgun."

Laura laughed and Mac said, "I thought you and Dave came from New England. Don't you know how you get clams?"

"I always used a .22," I said in an attempt to keep with Mac's sense of humor, but nobody laughed.

"Are those any good?" Dave asked.

"Of course they are."

"You've had 'em before?"

"I've fished, crabbed, and clammed from San Diego to Seattle and these are great. Do you guys want me to cook 'em up?"

"You didn't get very many," Dave said. "There really aren't enough for all of us there."

"That's why I bought these," he said and we looked at the bag in his other hand.

"You bought some?" Dave asked.

"There's a limit on how many you can dig but not on how many you can

buy. I'll cook 'em up if you guys want some."

Dave and I were all for it, but neither Lyle nor Laura were interested. They came over and peered into the bucket curiously, but the look on each of their faces was anything but whetted appetite.

"I love steamers," Dave said. "I haven't had any since..."

"Since you lived back in Boston?" I suggested.

He nodded.

"Are these as good as the ones on the east coast?" I asked.

"They're great," Mac said. "I have them every chance, whenever I come up here."

He took them to the corner of the office where Dave had placed a camping stove, and while he started the steamers the rest of us drifted back into our discussion. We talked for awhile and pretty soon Mac, who had his back to us, had the pot on the stove.

"I just think if this country was Christian, it would solve a lot of problems," Laura repeated.

"I don't think anyone can argue against your point of view," I said.

"Do you mean Christian by law?" Dave asked.

"Sure."

"But if you make Christianity the state religion, you're going to be making people do a lot of things they disagree with," Dave said.

"People already have to do a lot of things they don't want," she said. "And this will not only improve their behavior, it'll help save their souls."

"And it would help straighten out what's wrong with this country," Lyle said. "But until that day arrives, I think what we need is a stronger government to keep things under control."

"I just don't like the idea of pushing religion down people's throats," Dave

said. He looked across the office and asked, "What do you think, Mac?"

Mac glanced back in our direction and shrugged. He seemed more interested in how quickly his clams were cooking.

"Come on, Mac," I said, "Do you think this country would be better if it were more Christian? Say, if we made it officially a Christian country?"

"No," he replied.

Not one of us said a word for a moment and Mac continued to watch his pot.

"Why do you say that?"

Laura finally asked.

"Ohhhh..." he began and shook his head without looking back at us. "I really don't like talking about religion."

Christian founders

"But the people who founded this country wanted it to be a Christian country," she persisted.

"Had they wanted it to be a Christian country they'd have written it into the Constitution."

"But the Founding Fathers were Christians," she continued. "They even speak of God in the Declaration of Independence."

He turned around and said, "You're right, the Founding Fathers were Christian, or at least born Christian, though some, like Jefferson, were deists when they grew up."

"What's a deist?" I asked.

"It's a philosophy that embraces a moral code, but denies the interference by a god or gods in the natural laws of the universe. And you're also correct that the Declaration of Independence refers to God," he said to Laura, "though actually, the word used is Creator."

"So isn't that evidence that they wanted some religious aspects to our country?"

"Not really. The Declaration of Independence was the document that notified the King of England and

Confederation, the document that preceded the Constitution.

"And," he continued, "the Founding Fathers themselves never referred to the Declaration of Independence as a legal document. It wasn't something they would reference as the 'law of the land.' And it isn't today. Even its primary author, Thomas Jefferson, would have thought it funny if someone had referred to it in court.

"Later, when they drew up the Constitution, in 1787, they were drawing up the document that would govern the country. And, when they did, they were well aware that they were neither referencing God nor including the Declaration of Independence into the Constitution."

"So what's your point?" she asked.

"My point is that the Founding Fathers very carefully avoided including religion when they wrote and adopted the Constitution."

"But how can you be so sure that a Christian country wasn't what they wanted?" she asked.

"George Washington himself stated that the United States is in no sense a Christian nation. He said this even though it was founded by Christians."

"You know" she added, "John Adams, the man who became the second President, said the only reason our Constitution would work is because we're a Christian people."

The First Amendment

"Yes, but even if that were true, the people being Christian and the government being Christian are two different issues. Besides, those words of Washington and Adams do not constitute a legal mandate that would or wouldn't make Christianity the official religion of this country. That



English Parliament that the 13 American colonies were breaking away from England. It was not a legal document in the sense that it was a blueprint document that governs this country. For one thing, the United States was not a 'country' when the Declaration of Independence was written. They were 13 independent states. From the time the Declaration of Independence was adopted until the Constitution was ratified, these newly independent states were more akin to NATO than a country. This was true even under the Articles of

would have had to have come from the Constitution, and the Founding Fathers not only avoided including religion into the original writing of the Constitution, but a few years later, in 1791, they made a prohibition against the establishment of a state religion in the first sentence of the First Amendment: 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...' Christians said that."

I myself am a wuss when it comes to arguing with beautiful women, but Mac stood his ground. I had to admire his guts even though I thought he was being stupid.

"But wouldn't it be better if it were Christian?" she persisted.

"Of course not."

"How can you say that?" she asked in a shocked tone. "Christianity is based on love."

"Really? Does Christianity guarantee that we'd be a better country?" he asked and turned back to the pot whose cover he lifted to examine its contents. "Spain was a Christian nation during the Inquisition; Germany was a Christian nation under Hitler; even the judges who hung the poor unfortunates in Salem in 1692 were Christians. Slave owners were Christians and those who broke the treaties with the Indians were too. Also, both the whites who lynched blacks in the South and the blacks who rioted in L.A. were mostly Christians. History is replete with examples of Christians as well as Christian countries doing the unforgivable. Simply being Christian did not make who these people were and what they did any better. Nor did it make countries, that were officially Christian, any better."

"What do you have against Christianity?" she asked.

"Nothing," he said softly. "But even if I were a priest or a minister I'd still feel the same way I do now."

"Why? Those horrible people you just mentioned simply weren't following the Bible."

The Bible and history

"Really? Consider this: the Old Testament is almost a handbook for those who want to commit genocide. For instance, we forget that after the walls of Jericho came tumbling down to Joshua's trumpets, everyone in the city was killed. That in conquering A'i the Israelites slaughtered every man woman and child they could find—12,000 in all. Then there are massacres at Azekah, Makkedah, and Libnach—where virtually all the citizens were killed. And it doesn't stop there. There's Gezer, Eglon, Debir, Hebron—city after city—dozens of cities, where the entire populace or nearly the entire populace were killed in the name of God.

Our Founding Fathers did something no one else had ever done—they institutionalized our rights apart from God and government. They did not open them to ecclesiastical or bureaucratic interpretation or license.

"After Joshua there's the killing of Canaanites, Perizzites, Philistines. And in the time of King David the killing goes on with Syrians; some 80,700 in one battle after another.

"Exodus 15:3 says 'The Lord is a man of war.' I have trouble construing the Bible as love?

"And when we get to the New Testament, in Matthew 10:34 we can read Christ's own words: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.'

"And following the New Testament...well, where do you want to start? It was claimed that there appeared in the sky over Constantine, the first Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity, a Christian symbol with the words 'In this sign, conquer.' And conquer he did.

"In the ensuing years, there was more slaughter, but things really start to get interesting with the Crusades, starting in 1095 under Pope Urban II. One crusade after another, for two centuries, including at least one children's crusade that left thousands of children dead, raped, or sold into slavery—all conducted by Christians in the name of God.

"Then you don't have long to wait until the Inquisition. It's purpose was to stop dissension against the 'one true faith.' Jews, pagans, and even those who had differing interpretations of the Bible became targets of those who acted in the name of God. The inquisitors' interpretation of the Bible told them they not only could do this, but they were obligated to do it. People died because of it."

He checked the pot again.

"But, in the beginning," Mac continued, "the problem with the Inquisition was that you couldn't get people off their duffs to go after the heathens, the infidels, and the apostates. Then in 1208, by papal decree, it was decided that those who persecuted the infidels could also seize their property—and so the Inquisition was born."

"This sounds like civil forfeiture we now have in this country," Dave remarked.

"It was," Mac replied. "The average soldier or priest didn't care what the infidels were doing until he found out he could cash in on it. At the very least, hundreds of thousands died and the number of casualties may have run into the millions."

"All I can say is that the people who ran the Inquisition weren't very Christian," Laura said.

"Are you telling me they weren't Christians?" Mac asked.

"No, I'm saying they didn't act Christian."

"Do you think *they* felt they weren't acting Christian. Are you telling me they didn't feel that they were acting on the behalf of God?"

"I'm not saying that. I don't know what they believed."

"Well, it actually doesn't matter what they were thinking, but it's important to know these acts were committed in the name of religion. And, centuries later—centuries during which more mayhem was committed in the name of God and Jesus Christ—the witch hunts began."

"You sound anti-Catholic," Laura said.

"I'm not. I could tell tales of the Protestants, Jews, Muslims, and who knows who else, each who have taken their turns hunting down heretics and infidels, burning, flogging, strangling, or bleeding to death those who disagreed with them, and seizing their property.

"But it is interesting that even the witch hunts came about because of a papal decree that allowed the accusers, on the basis of accusation alone, to seize the property of supposed witches—usually, rich widows—and the only defense the accused had was to 'prove' they weren't witches. In other words, they were presumed guilty until they 'proved' themselves innocent, an almost impossible task, particularly in light of the fact you had probably already confessed to witchcraft while being physically tortured. You know, many women were raped and sexually mutilated by their inquisitors."

"I don't want to hear about things like that," Laura said.

"That's okay. But the list of religious wars conducted in the name of God is frightening. The amount of terrorism perpetrated in His name is stupefying. And the amount of persecution committed in His honor is mind boggling."

"You sound anti-religious."

He threw a stick of butter in a dish and put it in the microwave.

"No, I'm not anti-religious at all. All I am for is the absolute separation of church and state. That's why I agree with the Founding Fathers and I don't want this country to accept Christianity or any other religion as the state religion.

"But, even if you were right, and I am antireligious, anti-Christian, or whatever else you could accuse me of, would it diminish the atrocities committed in the name of God? Does your believing I'm anti-anything make religious atrocities more palatable?"

"But, in the beginning," Mac continued, "the problem with the Inquisition was that you couldn't get people off their duffs to go after the heathens, the infidels, and the apostates. Then in 1208, by papal decree, it was decided that those who persecuted the infidels could also seize their property—and so the Inquisition was born."

"This sounds like civil forfeiture we now have in this country," Dave remarked.

She didn't want to hear Mac go on with what she regarded as an attack on religion. So she asked, "Then what do you think would help straighten out this country?"

"That's easy: an understanding by the public of what their Constitution says and really means, along with a demand on the public's part that it be enforced. Without that, nothing, including religion, is going to save us.

Rights and freedom

"The Constitution is important because neither Christianity, nor the Bible, nor any other religion, nor any other political document I know of, places the individual first like the Constitution of the United States does. The Constitution is about limits on government; it's about individual rights and freedom."

"There's freedom in the Bible," she said.

"There's free choice in the Bible, but not civil freedoms. If personal rights and freedom were a Christian concept, it wouldn't have taken Christian countries until almost 1800 A.D. to finally come up with a country with individual freedoms. Not only that, but the Eastern Roman Empire would never have adopted it as the state religion. Constantine in particular would never have adopted it. He was an emperor and the Eastern Roman Empire was a dictatorship."

"What about the Ten Commandments?" she asked. "Wouldn't they serve as a nice basis for law?"

"I don't take issue with the Ten Commandments, and the Ten Commandments are not unique to the Judeo-Christian ethic. Every religion has similar directives. But they are a list of proscriptions regulating an individual's behavior. Our Constitution and the Bill of Rights are exactly the opposite. Together, they are a list of proscriptions *against* authority—temporal authority."

"But our civil rights are God-given," Laura said.

"If our rights are God-given, then why don't all Christian nations have a Bill of Rights?" He didn't wait for an answer.

"Laura, nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of freedom of speech, freedom from unreasonable search and seizures, the right to bear arms, or even the freedom of religion—in particular there's no freedom of religion.

"What's more, look at the biblical view of property rights. When asked about taxes, Christ takes a coin and asks the questioner whose visage is on it and, of course, it's Caesar's. Christ's response is, 'Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.'"

"What's the problem with that?" she asked.

"The problem is, a man works for pay and presumably—even though we'd assume he now owns the money he's worked for—just because it has a

picture of a government figure on it, it still belongs to the government.”

“So?”

“The implication here is that you give the government whatever is theirs but who decides what’s theirs? Why, the government does. And, by extension, does this mean that since the money belongs to Caesar that anything we swap that money for also belongs to Caesar? Maybe not, but it would seem that way.

“And this, of course, is the same mentality our government uses to justify civil forfeiture—that is, it doesn’t believe in ‘property rights’ of the citizens anymore. Of course, they use the Orwellian argument that property doesn’t have any rights.”

“What do you mean ‘Orwellian?’” I asked.

“In his novel, 1984, George Orwell warns against the way government personnel twist the meanings of words. He refers to this practice of changing meaning as ‘newspeak.’ In this case, when we the citizens talk about property rights, we are talking about our right to have property. The bureaucrat’s and politician’s practice is to twist the meaning and say it means property has rights and, gee, everyone knows property doesn’t have rights.”

“But they can’t do that,” I said.

“They’re doing it now. That’s actually the logic they use,” he said.

Laura seemed to have dropped out of the conversation, but Mac turned to her and said, “Our Founding Fathers did something no one else had ever done—they institutionalized our rights apart from God and government. They did not open them to ecclesiastical or bureaucratic interpretation or license. They were the people’s rights, apart from all else—at least until recently. Now there is the notion we get our rights from the government or the church, or somewhere else and that’s dangerous.

“Among the results is that, by not tying the Constitution and the Bill of Rights to Christianity and by not mak-

ing the United States a Christian nation, anyone can come here and be an American: Catholics, Lutherans, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Vietnamese boat people, freed African slaves, English college professors; the unwanted, the unwashed, Duffy, Silveira...”

And we all laughed.

“And why do you think they want to come here? Because it is the only country in the world, the only country in all of time, where you can come and say you belong and you can become a citizen by just believing in one thing: the Constitution.

If we want to be Christians, fine. God will save our souls. But, if we want to live free, then we have to grab our rights and hold onto them for dear life because no one else is going to grab them for us. God won’t. Read the Bible. See what it says. He’s got more important things to worry about.

“In fact, once you’re in this country, you don’t even have to be an American to have the Bill of Rights apply to you. Once you’re here, on American soil, those Amendments protect you even if you’ve never been here before. Even if you have no intention of ever becoming a citizen. Even if you’re a Communist who wants to burn the flag, tear up the Bill of Rights, and enslave us all—the Bill of Rights protects you because the Founding Father’s notion was that they don’t belong to us, they belong to everybody.”

The microwave had already dinged and Mac took the dish of butter out and poured a little in a bowl for himself, then he removed the top from the pot and started taking out clams and putting them on a plate.

“Oh, now I’m going to have a religious experience,” he said looking at what he’d served himself.

Dave and I went over and helped ourselves.

“One last thing,” Mac said. “The problem with our Constitution and the Bill of Rights is that the people don’t seem to know much about them nowadays. Our own government seems to work against the Constitution and treats it as just a terrible inconvenience to doing a day’s work, and what with the way those infringements become institutionalized, it appears as if the American people are becoming used to it. It’s ironic but immigrants, because they have to read the Constitution, know more about it than most of those who are born here.”

“Yeah?” I asked as if wondering what his point was.

“Well, we’d better keep letting these people in because they’re the only ones who are going to know what the Constitution and, in particular, the Bill of Rights are and why they’re important. I’ll bet your kids, born here, don’t.”

“So, don’t think for a minute that I’m antireligious or anti-Christian in any way, Laura. If we want to be Christians, fine. God will save our souls. But, if we want to live free, then we have to grab our rights and hold onto them for dear life because no one else is going to grab them for us. God won’t. Read the Bible. See what it says. He’s got more important things to worry about.”

He sat down and started eating his clams. Laura watched intently and finally reached over and took one.

“How do you do this?” she asked.

“Take it out of its shell like this,” he said demonstrating the technique, “and dip it into the butter, and...”

“Wow,” she whispered. “These sure don’t taste like they look,” and she sat down and started eating from Mac’s plate. Δ

Here's how my family makes its diverse country living

By Patrick McMahon

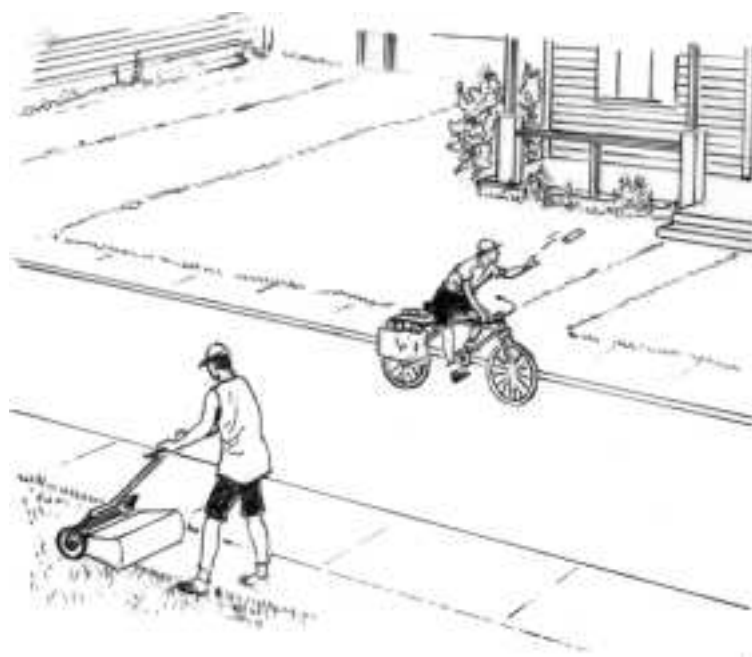
Making a living in the country can prove to be one of the most frustrating experiences for someone seeking to fulfill their dreams of self-sufficiency by moving away from heavily populated areas. I have found two things to be true about most areas that remain sparsely inhabited. First, it seems that the weather in these areas is not always the most desirable. This may account for the lack of influx of newcomers or the development of large city areas. Secondly, many of these small towns seem to be closed to outside influence. Most of the good jobs in the country are taken by people who know other people. It seems it's not what you know but who you know. One of the best ways for a newcomer to an area to gain acceptance is by owning a business.

Most of us do not arrive in our new country homes with armored cars full of money, so we may have to make it on a shoestring budget for a while, or work on several part time ventures to create a full time income. Following are a few ideas for making a country living which have worked for our family.

Periodical delivery

Just about everybody enjoys reading the newspaper occasionally, and even

tiny towns have their population that likes to receive home delivery everyday. This is a potential business opportunity. There are many newspapers and periodicals published at different times and frequencies, and they all need some method of distribution. Most daily newspapers accomplish



this through the use of motor route contractors or carriers. These are people who arrange a contract with the newspaper to buy the publication for distribution to subscribers at retail cost, and dealers receive profit from subscription sales to individuals. Motor routes are sometimes easy to come by because most newspapers are early morning distribution, which means getting out of bed anywhere from 1:30 a.m. to 5 a.m. seven days a week. Few people are willing to eliminate regular weekend time normally enjoyed by sleeping in. People in my area seem to have an aversion to driving for any length of time. This has also worked to my advantage since I enjoy driving. Another advantage is

that my work day for newspaper delivery is complete by 6:30 am, leaving the rest of the day for other work, either as a contractor or just for chores around the homestead.

Weekly profit from motor route delivery generally averages from \$150 to \$500 depending on the size of the route, number of subscribers, and dealer drops on the route. There are also other weekly newspapers, pennysavers, periodicals, and real estate magazines that contract delivery. I

have even contracted for years with an independent advertising company that distributes telephone books.

There are drawbacks to delivering news publications. Most newspapers are printed seven days a week. This translates into little time off to travel or to catch up on sleep. As a contractor you do have the ability to hire contractor substitutes. This works out wonderfully if you can find someone

willing to be available for the job. Another down side to this type of work is that your vehicle generally takes a beating, gaining high mileage and long running times.

Diaper service

For my family, it is necessary to conduct business in different disciplines in order to make a living. Besides working part time in a local pharmacy, my wife is owner of a cotton diaper service. In spite of the fact that we live in an area of low population, there are still plenty of babies being born, and all these babies need diapers.

With convenience a major factor in our society today, many parents are choosing disposable diapers. Others are more environmentally conscious and also feel that the natural cotton fiber of cloth diapers is better for the baby's skin. Cloth diapers are a lot of work, though, and a baby in its first year soils about 70 diapers a week.

A cotton diaper service provides convenience at about the same cost as disposable diapers. Our service provides 70 clean diapers, delivered once each week, a container, and mesh laundry bag for \$20 per week. The diapers are cleaned at a local coin-operated laundry facility. Profit from the diaper service from each customer is about \$15. Even a handful of customers provides a fair part-time income for one day of work each week.

Landscaping

My third addition to the family economy is my personal favorite. Through years of working various jobs I have gained tremendous knowledge in the field of landscaping. With this experience I have been able to make a successful part-time income for 10 years now. There are three types of people who hire landscape contractors.

The first, and probably the most reliable, are the senior citizens who need maintenance on lawns, shrubs, and gardens. Many seniors are no longer able to perform the physical tasks and are willing to hire honest, reputable people who can do the work for them.

Secondly, there are the two-income family homeowners who do not have the time or desire to do yardwork and landscaping projects, but they have the income to support hiring a contractor.

The third type of potential client is the commercial operation. All types of businesses strive to maintain a professional image. Since the landscape is the first and lasting impression, these companies almost always need to hire

qualified professional landscapers to help uphold this image.

Knowledge in the field of landscaping is readily acquired through diligent reading on the subject and hands-on experience. College courses in biology, botany, or horticulture are also very helpful additions to one's credentials. Some experience in basic bookkeeping and customer service are very handy. Costs for starting in landscaping average about \$4,000 for basic equipment, in addition to a truck. Liability insurance costs from \$800 to \$1,000 per year. As new equipment is desired it can be purchased when the need arises.

We are currently planning to expand our landscaping business into a full service nursery and garden center specializing in cold hardy perennials. Over the next five years our intent is to plant several varieties of perennials, shrubs, and trees each year. Within the next couple of years we would like to offer this nursery stock to the public directly from our 20-acre farm (located with frontage on a major highway) and also through sales of our products through the landscaping service.

Dog breeding

Finally, there is yet another addition to our homestead economy. This is dog breeding. We have an appreciation for giant breeds of dogs that were designed for certain purposes. The Saint Bernard seems to fit perfectly with our philosophy. These dogs are huge, sometimes weighing close to 200 pounds. They are also strong, capable of heavy work such as pulling carts, sleds, etc. Saint Bernards are also very affectionate and gentle with children, yet protective of their property.

One breeding pair of Saints registered with the American Kennel Club (AKC) may gross \$7,000 or more each year depending on the frequency of breeding and the number of puppies sold. Many other breeds of dog can bring in much more profit per year.

Expenses include veterinary care, accessories, registrations and licenses, shots, advertising, and large amounts of dog food.

Time is a major expense when dealing with dog families. In order to become a working part of the homestead, dogs require diligent training and family affection.

There are many outlets for purebred puppies including local newspaper advertising, out of town big city newspapers, and specialty magazines. Puppies are most often shipped by air freight to their new homes. We have begun offering personal delivery to any location within a 400-mile radius for a fee slightly more than air freight. The advantage to delivery is that the puppy is transferred directly from your hands to the new owner without the risks involved in an unsupervised transport in an airplane. We are also able to travel a bit to some interesting weekend destinations.

There are hundreds of breeds of dogs, each with a different set of traits and purposes. If you decide to breed dogs, find a breed that suits your lifestyle. Every breed sells for a different price. Giant dogs are definitely not for everyone and are not the most profitable by any means.

Obviously, making a living in the country is not the easiest of things to do. With a little creativity and the desire to work, a modest income is at your fingertips. Of course, these methods of generating income are not going to work for everyone. They have served me well, however, allowing me to live my dreams in a place where I have always wanted to be and independent from the monotony of the daily grind at a "regular day job."

Hopefully some of this information will provide the incentive for other homesteaders to assert their independence by making a living in the country on their own. Δ

Build a backwoods cat-boat — it's super-simple, inexpensive

By Rev. J.D. Hooker

If you like quick summer fishing trips, waterfowl hunting, running trotlines or trap-lines, float hunting, or any of a number of other water related outdoor activities, you already know that having some kind of boat as part of your equipment is just about a prerequisite. However, if you've priced commercially built boats lately—from the simple aluminum john boats up to one of those flashy fully loaded bass boats—you already know the prices are generally much higher than many of us are willing to pay.

At the same time, many of us who already own one or more of these manufactured watercraft aren't always so keen on loading, hauling, unloading, and reloading our boats as frequently as even a daily fishing or hunting trip might demand. But leaving a boat—even a cheap, used one—unattended at water's edge often means a missing boat, even in

"remote" areas where you wouldn't think it would happen.

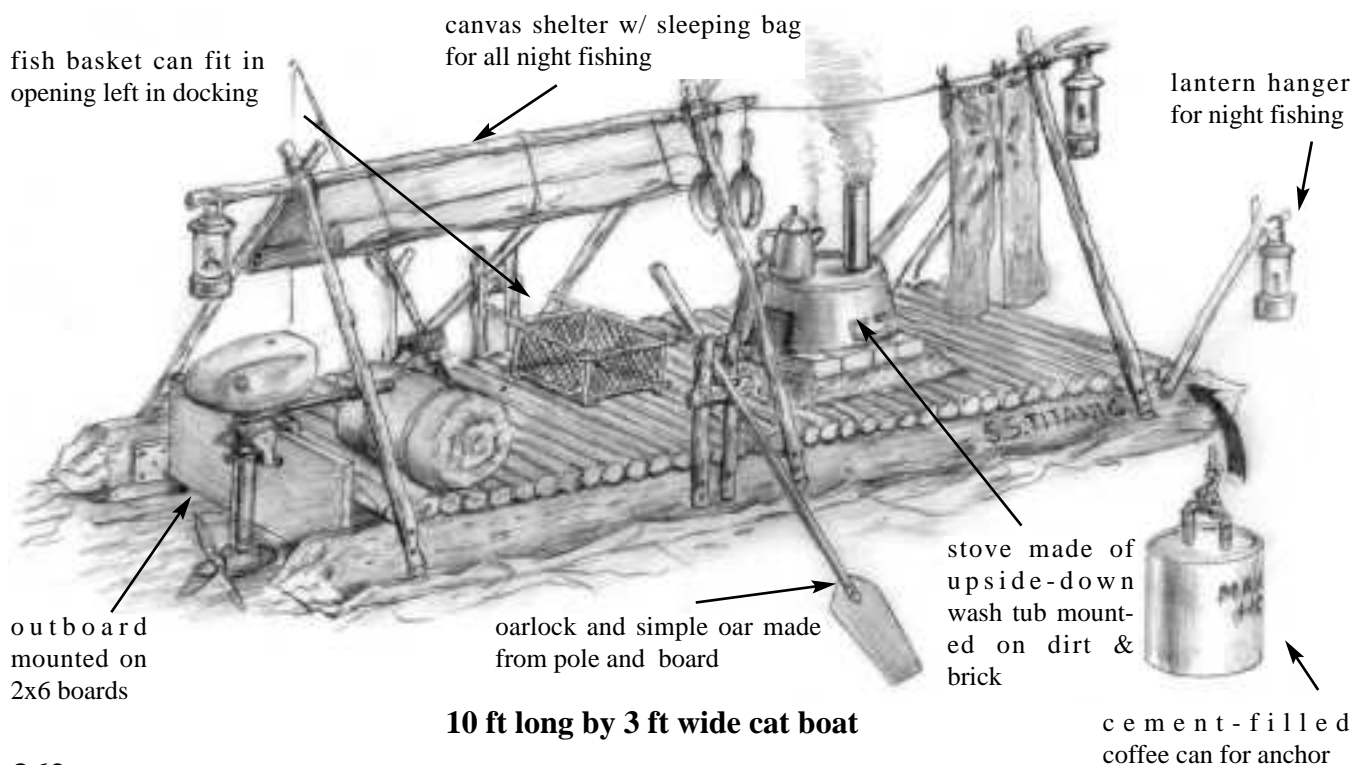
For these reasons, one of my long-time favorite watercraft is the extremely simple and ultra-inexpensive wooden cat-boat. These boats seem to have been drifting in and out of popularity since the early 18th century when they were frequently used by trappers, fishermen, waterfowlers, and others along the Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi Rivers, as well as on many lakes.

Today, despite all the technological advances, you'll find that there are still several excellent reasons for putting together and using these simple watercraft, not the least of which is that, because of the small amount of time and material invested in it, you'll find few reasons for worrying about leaving your cat-boat unattended. In more than 25 years of using these boats, I've never had one come up missing.

Not much is needed in the way of materials to construct your own cat-boat: just a pair of 12-inch or larger diameter logs that are at least 10-feet long (for most purposes I've found 20 foot lengths ideal), a quantity of smaller 2-inch to 4-inch diameter logs about 3-feet long, and a supply of large nails. While I've found the use of a chainsaw and a regular claw hammer helpful, the only really indispensable tool for fashioning one of these boats is a sharp single-bit ax.

The illustrations show pretty plainly the method I've used for assembling several of these super-simple watercraft over the years. Depending on your own preferences and the body of water you'll be using it on, a cat-boat can be paddled, rowed (with inclusion of the optional wooden oar-locks), or even poled along if the water is shallow enough. For most of my own purposes though, I've found that mounting an inexpensive used outboard motor on a wooden mount greatly increases the craft's utility and versatility.

Though the completed boat is pretty heavy, it's also mighty maneuverable and stable.



10 ft long by 3 ft wide cat boat

Most times I find I prefer using the cat-boat as a “big water” boat, that is, on lakes, oxbows, and wide slow rivers. But I’ve also found this simple watercraft to be highly adaptable and readily modified, making it exceptionally well suited to customization for special uses.

During waterfowl season I’ll often attach brush, reeds, cattails, etc., to the sides of the boat, arching this camouflaging inwards to form a roof that provides an ideal floating hunting blind.

For night-fishing it’s even easier to nail on a couple of stout poles to hang lanterns from for added visibility.

Of course, lashing a waterproof tarp over a simple pole framework can provide dependable shelter from sun, wind, rain, or other weather. In fact, with the further addition of a lightweight canvas “tick” stuffed with straw, dead grasses, or dried leaves, I’ve often found it comfortable enough to sleep right out on the water.

Short-forked sticks can easily be nailed in place for use as rod-holders, and a few inches of clay-based soil can be firmly tamped in place over a portion of the wooden decking to allow a spot for a fire for warmth or cooking. I’ll usually also include an old metal wash-tub, cut out as shown, for use as a cooking stove.

The majority of the cat-boats I’ve built and used have served, at least part of the time, for fishing and trotlining purposes, so nearly every one of them has been fitted with a handy and easily-removable wire fish basket. Fashioned from only a few stout sticks and some galvanized poultry netting or hardware cloth, such readily fashioned “live baskets” offer yet another valuable but simple extra addition to the cat-boat.

In fact, it’s amazing to realize that such a quickly and easily constructed watercraft, made at practically no cost, can end up sporting practically all of the comforts of home should you opt to include them.

When anchoring a cat-boat for fishing, hunting, just resting, or whatever,

I’ll normally let down two anchors—one up front, and one in the rear for extra stability—on $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch nylon rope. I used to stick primarily with standard kellick anchors fashioned as illustrated from a boiled forked limb and a large rock, but for the past couple of years, I’ve taken to relying on simple anchors produced from placing a bent piece of $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch or $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch rebar, bent as shown, inside a large coffee can filled with cement.

All told, whether you’re unwilling to part with the funds needed to purchase a commercially produced watercraft or you just don’t feel like taking any extra risks with your “good” bass or speed boat, for everyday fishing, trapping, hunting, or any other rough day-to-day uses you’ll find this ruggedly dependable and well proven cat-boat to be suited to many of your backwoods needs. Δ



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Buy your country place from the government

By Dorothy Cady

While looking for your place in the country, you've probably been researching real estate books, newspaper ads, and maybe even using the Internet. You may have even considered getting land based on the country's old Homesteading Act. While the Homesteading Act has been repealed, that doesn't mean you cannot get land from the government. What it does mean, however, is that you'll have to pay for it. It is worth looking into, though, because you can get some very good deals, and have access to some properties that you simply cannot buy through a private party.

This article shows you which agencies sell real property, how it is sold, where you can get information about sales, how to buy real property from the government, how to complain if you have a problem, and how to contact the various selling agencies.

Which agencies sell real property

Not every government agency sells real property. Some Federal agencies turn over any real property they have to the General Services Administration (GSA) which sells the property for them. The Federal Property Resources Service (FPRS) of the GSA sells a significant amount of surplus Federal Government real property. The GSA is the government's largest disposer of real property, so it might be the first place you want to look.

If you are looking primarily for undeveloped land, another agency you will want to contact is the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). If you are looking to buy a farm, the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) of the U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) sells this type of real property.

farms, and commercial property include the U. S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), U.S. Customs (a division of the Treasury Department), the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and the U. S. Army Corp of engineers.

State and some local government agencies also sell real property. For example, the state of Nevada sells state lands, as does the state of Utah, and others. Many states and government agencies even have Internet web sites where you can see what lands are currently available for sale, and where you can also get the information you need regarding the process of buying these lands.

How real property is sold

Government agencies use many different methods to sell the real properties within their possession. One of the

most common methods, and often the easiest for the buyer, is the sealed bid method.

Other methods include the public auction, sealed bid auctions, spot bids, fixed price sales, negotiation, broker/individual sales, and portfolio sales. Not all of these methods are commonly used for real property, however, nor are all of these methods particularly useful to the buyer looking for a piece of real estate. The sales methods you should become familiar with if you are looking to purchase real property from the government are: sealed bid, auction, and broker/individual sale.



The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) also sells real property which once belonged to failed banks. Of primary interest to the homesteader would be the FDIC's offers of undeveloped land and single-family homes.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has foreclosed single-family homes, town-homes, condominiums, and "fixer-uppers" available for purchase, most of which are sold for fair market value, but you can sometimes pick up a pretty good deal.

Other Federal agencies which sell single family homes, vacant land,

During the sealed-bid process, the agency wanting to sell the property may prepare a formal document called an "Invitation for Bid." This document describes the property and explains the procedure for placing a bid. Interested individuals then submit a bid on the property. When the bid-opening date occurs, the bids are read publicly, and the sale of the property is awarded to the highest bidder who correctly followed the bidding procedures. Bids which have not properly followed the bidding procedures are disqualified, even if they are the highest bid. Thus, it's important to note and follow the specific bidding instructions for any property on which you want to bid.

The main drawback to the sealed bid method is that you may find yourself outbid by only a few dollars: Thus, while you don't want to pay more for a property than it is worth or than you can afford, you must bid as high as you feel reasonably comfortable doing if you really want the property.

Auctions for real property are held the same way that auctions for personal property are held. Real property auctions are often held at the courthouse in the county in which the property is located, but can be held on the property itself, or any other place the auctioning agency deems appropriate. A real property auction works just like other auctions. On the day of the auction, people bid for the property until no higher bid is offered. The property is then sold to the highest bidder.

The main drawback to a public auction is that you can get-carried away with the spirit of the bidding process and end up paying more for the property than you would have paid for a similar piece offered by a private party. Of course, having to be present during the bid, or having to provide an authorized proxy can also be a drawback, particularly if you live any distance from where the auction is being held.

Real property is also often sold through private real estate brokers. These brokers negotiate the sale of these properties on the government's behalf, however, so make sure you are getting a good deal before you buy. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sell property by this method.

How do you find out about real property sales

The government advertises and promotes available properties in several ways. Most government agencies list properties for sale in advertisements in local, regional, and national papers. Specialty publications such as the Commerce business Daily also carry announcements for government property sales, as do various trade publications. Agencies also post notices in various government buildings including local post offices and county courthouses. Some government agencies also advertise property sales through radio advertisements and even local flyers. Other government agencies will put your name on a mailing list and notify you when properties are coming up for sale. (Sometimes a small fee is charged for this service.)

With the explosion of the use of the Internet, many government agencies also use various web sites to advertise available properties. Many federal as well as state agencies have their own internet home page. (See the inset on this page for a list of some useful web sites.)

Local real estate brokers have lists of properties for sale, particularly HUD and VA properties. Some local auctioneers also receive notice of upcoming government property auctions, so you may be able to get information from a local auctioneer in your area or in the area where the property you are looking for is located.

Some useful internet addresses:

Federal Deposit Insurance

Corporation (FDIC), Asset Sales:

<http://www.fdic.gov/assets/index.html>

U.S. General Services

Administration:

<http://www.gsa.gov/pbs/pr/prhome.htm>

Housing and Urban Development:

<http://www.hud.gov/homes.html>

Government Asset Sales: list of state

links: [http://www.financenet.gov:](http://www.financenet.gov:80/Financenet/sales/salestat.htm)

[80/Financenet/sales/salestat.htm](http://www.financenet.gov:80/Financenet/sales/salestat.htm)

List of federal links:

[http://www.financenet.gov:](http://www.financenet.gov:80/financenet/sales/salefed.htm)

[80/financenet/sales/salefed.htm](http://www.financenet.gov:80/financenet/sales/salefed.htm)

U. S. Customs auction information:

<http://www.treas.gov/auctions/customs/>

Bureau of Land Management:

<http://www.blm.gov>

Consumer Information Center:

http://www.pueblo.gsa.gov/cic_text/fed_p

State of Utah:

<http://www.whl.state.ut.us/saleinfo.htm>.

Commerce Business Daily:

<http://cbd.cos.com>

How to buy real property from the government

Although there are often very specific procedures you must follow in order to participate in the sale of real property by the government, here are some general guidelines you should follow.

First, before you attend a government auction or submit a sealed bid for a piece of property, do your homework. Contact the appropriate agency and find out basic information about the property and the auction. Get a copy of the "invitation for Bid" or similar document if it is available. Make sure you understand what it tells you as most sales are final.

Specifically ask when the sale or auction will take place and where, what sales method will be used, if

Agencies you can contact for information:

U. S. Army Corps of Engineers
Directorate of Real Estate
20 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000.

Federal Property Resources Service-D
U.S. General Services Administration
Washington, D. C. 20405
1-800-472-1313.

Tennessee Valley Authority
Surplus Sales
1101 Market St.
P.O. Box 11127
Chattanooga, TN 37401-2127
1-423-751-8331.

EG&G Dynatrend, Inc.,
U. S. Customs Service Support Div.
3702 Pender Drive, Suite 400
Fairfax, VA 22030
1-703-273-7373.

Consumer Information Center
Dept. 515B Pueblo, CO 81009

there are any special restrictions or requirements, and how payment is to be made. Although some agencies such as HUD and the VA assist the buyer with financing, most agencies expect you to pay for your purchase with a money order, certified check, or cash. If you are hoping to finance your purchase, be sure to ask if that is allowed, and how soon your lender will need to provide the agency with the full funds. Then make sure you have already qualified for the loan and received permission from the lender to make a bid for the property.

Next, visit the property. Walk its property line noting flaws or problems you may have to pay to correct. If the property has buildings on it, inspect them carefully. If appropriate, pay a professional, certified inspector to look at the property for you. Also, if there's a possibility that part or all of the property is considered to be wet lands or other protected lands for which you may have to have specific

government approval to build or live on, find this out ahead of time.

As with private property for sale by owner or through a broker, you may need permission to enter and inspect the property. If so, be sure to get that permission. You can ask the agency selling the property whether you need permission, and if so, who to get it from if it isn't them.

As part of your homework, don't jump right into the first auction or sealed bid opportunity you find. If possible, attend a few auctions to see how the process works and to get a feeling for what property in the area is worth. If you are going to be submitting a sealed bid, try to find out what similar properties have sold for at past sealed bid sales. Some government agencies will give you this information.

You should also compare the price of private property sold in the surrounding area. Any licensed real estate agent should be able to tell you what similar properties have sold for in the recent past, or you can check county records.

Finally, before bidding on property, try to find out whether it has been appraised, and if so, try to find out the amount of the appraisal. If it isn't public knowledge, try to at least find out what appraisal company or individual the agency uses to appraise their real property. You may then be able to get a hypothetical value from this agency for a property similar to that on which you wish to bid or make an offer.

If you visited these parcels, researched restrictions and other relevant information, watched the auction if one was conducted, then compared the final sales prices, you'll have a pretty good feel for the process and potential of properties. However, as with all purchases, remember the saying "caveat emptor." Be a wary buyer. Carefully check out every aspect of a property before you prepare to put up your hard earned cash to buy it.

How to complain if you have problems

If you have a complaint or problem, for whatever reason, the first step is to contact the agency that sponsored the sale. Again, caveat emptor. Don't expect the agency to be sympathetic if you simply aren't happy with the property you bought after you bought it. Unless fraud or deception was involved, it was your responsibility to ensure the property was what you wanted before you participated in the sale.

On the other hand, if you found out that the price for which the property sold was less than your bid, you may have reason to question the sale. If the problem is with the sealed bid or offer you submitted, the agency may be able to tell you what it was about your bid or offer that caused it to not be accepted. Doing so isn't likely to change the sale process as sales are almost always final. However, knowing what went wrong this time may help insure it doesn't happen again.

If you were following information about a sale that you received from a non-governmental organization, and you believe it was misleading or inaccurate, you can complain to the government about it. In most cases, the government agency collects information and tracks these problems, but does not take immediate action on your behalf. The agencies are mostly interested in seeing any pattern of illegal activity, and finding out if there are any violations of Federal regulations.

Agencies to contact when you believe that fraud or illegal activity may have taken place include the Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Postal Service (if the activity involved the mails or anything sent through the mails), the state Attorney General office, state and local consumer offices, and local Better Business Bureaus.

Where to get more information

Contact these agencies for more information about real property for sale from the government.

For FmHA sales, contact the Farmers Home Administration county office in the county where the property is located. Look under Federal Government, Farmers Home Administration in the government pages of the phone book for the area. If the property you are looking for is not in the area covered by your local phone book, you often can find phone books for other cities and states at your local library.

To contact some of the other federal government agencies which sell real property, you also find the local office in the government pages of the phone book for the area in which the prop-

erty is located. Look under Federal Government, and then for the office's name such as the U. S. Army Corp of Engineers (look for Army, Corps of Engineers), U.S. Marshals Service (look for U.S. Marshals Service of the Department of Justice), or the V.A. (look for Veteran's Administration).

For V.A. and HUD properties, check with licensed real estate brokers in the area where the property is located. You can also contact HUD directly at 1-800-767-4483.

By writing to the Consumer Information Center, you can also receive a free or low-cost copies of various related booklets, and be added to the list to receive their quarterly publication of the U.S. Real Properties Sales List.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) has three regional offices that handle real property sales depending on where the property is

located. These offices are: the Northeast Service Center, 101 E River Dr. East Hartford, CT 06108 (1-800-873-7785), the Western Service Center, 4 Park Place, Newport Beach, CA 92714 (1-800-234-0867), and the Field Operations Branch, 1910 Pacific Avenue, Dallas, TX 75201 (1-800-568-9161).

For information concerning state lands available for sale, contact the Division of State Lands (or similar department) for the state in which the property is located. Also, see if the state has a web site. A search of the Internet for the state, then for "land sales" or similar topic may help you find the home page for that state. From there, look for a page containing information about real property sales.

You can also use your computer to contact the web sites also listed in the inset on page 78. Δ

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Here are a few tips on how to build bridges to neighborliness when you move to the country

By Harry Styron

One of the greatest pleasures and rewards of country life is getting to know your neighbors, to earn their trust, and to build mutually beneficial relationships, even deep bonds of friendship and community. It's a matter of building bridges from your household to other households. So don't screw it up.

I live in the Ozarks of Southwest Missouri, where in-migration has been largely responsible for the population doubling in the past 30 years. Most of the people moving in come from southern California and urban areas of the West and Midwest. Some people seem to quickly find a place in the community; others will not be accepted for a long time, often because of things that happened when they first arrived.

The changes of life which are a part of the impetus to move to a rural area are often stressful, so the migrants often aren't on their best behavior. By the time the typical El Alien decompresses enough to be considerate, he has often burned some bridges which would have been extremely convenient if left standing.

Bridge burners

Here are some of the mistakes:

Jawflap. Newcomers are often enormously frustrated with small-town school, church, and government officials. It's awfully ironic that the newcomers are so sure that whichever way something was done in whatever hell they escaped from, it was superior to the way it's done around here, where schools don't have security guards, local governments are fiscally sound (if somewhat poor), and crime rates and taxes are lower.

Usually, if the newcomer will ask questions and listen quietly to the responses, he will eventually learn how things work, whether his proposal has been attempted, and whether he's complaining to the wrong person, having inadvertently entered room 103 instead of room 101, or having accosted the county treasurer about something the county assessor is responsible for.

Understanding local politics requires years of patient study, whether you're in a city or a rural area, for few things are as subtle as the local politics. The candidate who seems to say what you want to hear is maybe seeking the support of the newcomers, because the other residents know how he treats his family and wouldn't vote for him for any reason.

Stereotyping. A newcomer will sometimes idealize about the residents, viewing them as pure and simple farmers, inbred hillfolk, mighty woodsmen, etc. Actually, they are assorted people, who represent the entire range of intelligence and character.

Longtime residents of rural areas do tend to be less emotionally effusive than TV sitcom characters. That's one of the traits that makes them good neighbors: a sense of personal privacy.

If you're in a community with a small population, keep in mind that some of the longtime residents are probably members of interrelated families. Until you have a good sense of these family relationships, which will include both feuds and friendly alliances, don't gossip.

Environmental snobbishness. The newcomer wonders why there's no municipal or county recycling center where he can take his accumulation of

catalogs, magazines, beverage containers, and plastic trash. The newcomer turns up his nose at the junk cars and piles of discarded stuff surrounding many country homes and outbuildings. Of course, there aren't many Kubota parts in those piles, but you might find any part you need for a Ford tractor, or a plumbing job.

Bridge builders

Getting along is really pretty easy. Make your kids behave. Drive considerately. If you keep your political opinions to yourself, someone might actually ask you what you think about the topic of the day, rather than tune you out every time you start ranting.

In many urban neighborhoods, the residents tend to be of similar incomes, tastes, and political leanings. In many rural areas, there is incredible diversity within and among individuals and a great but understated tolerance.

You may have one neighbor who is Republican Christian who raises marijuana and another who is an anarchist who raises poultry for Tyson. Or an opera fan with a cow-calf operation. Self-taught physicists and musical prodigies. Unbelievable ignorance among rich or poor. All living as neighbors, willing to respond to the need for help. And you may find deep, dark grudges and unsolved murders. Don't assume anything.

When you ask advice, you are showing your respect and humility, traits that make people easy to be neighbors with. Listen carefully and don't interrupt. Ask if you can assist your neighbor in doing something on his place so that you can learn how. If you present yourself well, your neighbor might lend you a hand or the tools you need.

Don't go from neighbor to neighbor, telling each what the others told you. People do the same tasks differently, depending on which tools they own, how many hands are available to help, how they learned, their experience level, etc. Just do the jobs. If the advice you received doesn't seem to work well, ask another neighbor without mentioning whose advice you tried to follow.

If you borrow a tool, take care of it. Make sure it is properly lubricated before and after you use it. Tighten loose bolts and electrical connections. If it's dull, sharpen it. Don't return it dirty or out of oil, regardless of its condition when you received it. If it breaks and you can't fix it, be honest and work something out. If you get hurt, consider that it's probably your own fault.

Helping hands

It's a damned shame that neighborliness is technically subject to the income tax, the value of traded labor and materials among proprietors of for-profit farms and hobbies being theoretically equivalent to taxable barter. But it's still possible to fly below the IRS radar.

Think about it this way. If you pay money for something, you are either paying with after-tax dollars or you are paying with pre-tax dollars for a legitimate deductible item, provided that you incur the hassle of properly documenting the transaction. So everything you pay cash for is taxed and expensive, in comparison to those things done as a matter of neighborliness.

If you live in a community where there is a tradition of helping hands, everybody benefits. While you're visiting with your neighbor, you might as well help mend a fence or pull a stump. Combine an ice cream social with putting a new floor on the host's porch.

Before you return your neighbor's trailer, for example, you might as well

put some firewood or a few bales of hay on it or something else modest and practical. Don't be extravagant; you don't want to give a gift beyond the ability of the recipient to reciprocate, just something to show your appreciation. Don't give liquor as a gift unless you are absolutely sure that it is welcomed by all adult members of the household.

Sometimes the newcomers decide to head back to the city. Perhaps they never learned how to build bridges to others, thinking always of themselves as victims. Country people know that everybody needs a helping hand now and then. Those who don't lend a hand and ask for help are victims of themselves, having missed out on the

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opportunity to live a respectful distance from the neighbors, linked by sturdy bridges. Δ

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WebTV: For under \$200, this is an economical way to get onto the Information Superhighway

By Vern Modeland

In Florida, Cheri Wallenbrock is working to get her world into some sort of order where she can consider herself at least somewhat self-reliant. The Internet figures into that, even though dollars are few and each one must count.

"I spend lots of time researching whatever topic I'm in the mood to research," she says.

"I have WebTV and love it. It's the cheapest way to get on the Internet. You don't have to know anything about computers to use it. It was a Christmas present the year before last from my brother. I've thanked him profusely."

Cheri, with her WebTV, got hooked up with kindred spirits across the country and beyond with whom she corresponds daily using her phone line plus her TV set and the WebTV box that rests upon it much like cable TV's interface.

Cheri's cyber-friends have explained to her how she didn't have to wait to grow at least some of what she wants to be sure it is organic food. They showed her how to raise things in patio containers and on window sills until the day comes when she can get access to a plot of ground to organically garden.

They showed her she could learn how to preserve foods now in the apartment where she lives. She can be building her knowledge as well as filling her pantry, for now and as a hedge against who-knows-what in the future, even if it is only a temporary shortage or hike in price.

On-line helpers

They have told her how they make compost using a dish pan or a wooden

box kept under the kitchen sink, letting earthworms convert food scraps into rich humus to feed those home-grown plants.

Her Homestead List e-mail contacts have introduced her to the economics and fine points of yard saling and dumpster diving, explaining to her that there's a gold mine in other people's castoffs that, with a little elbow grease or imagination, can further help



fill Cheri's growing list of things she'll need when it comes time she can get her dream place in the country.

They've cheered her up and cheered her on and been especially supportive when she had to suddenly go looking for another place to live.

"I send personal messages to friends and family all the time. I just click on 'Reply.' And when I'm surfing the Web, I can send interesting Web addresses to anyone I want so they too can go to the same Web addresses and see the same information.

"I keep my mother very busy reading all the links I find. She regularly tells me to stop sending her stuff for awhile. She can't keep up with me," says Cheri.

More than 1,500 miles away, on 40 acres in Colorado, Linda Jones, who

knows more than a little about computers, has WebTV too.

"My husband bought it because he can't figure out this computer. All the kids have their own accounts on it now. Just their own screen names; it's all on the same account actually," Linda says.

"It's perfect for people who want to surf (the Web) and have e-mail but don't want to learn the computer jargon and operating systems. Instead of \$1,000 and up, you are surfing and e-mailing for \$200 and under. It's also portable. You can take it with you much easier than a desktop computer."

Portable and simple

Portability along with simplicity and price are features that attracted Jim Pollard to WebTV. And he liked what he found so much he now sells them.

"You can take it with you wherever you go. And as long as a telephone line and a television set are there, you're on line. I was a 'natural bearded Santa' last year. I went to Lexington, Kentucky, for 34 days. I just took my unit with me. I stayed in an extended stay motel and hooked it up to my TV and the telephone line and the minute I turned it on my e-mail was there waiting for me."

Ninety messages at a time is about average, Pollard says. Many of the messages have to do with his other interests.

Pollard goes on to explain that he thinks the time is now to learn and practice self-sufficiency. And he takes his belief on the road to preparedness shows as well as out on the electronic highway. A recent sampling of his travel schedule included appearances at Paducah, Kentucky, Nashville, Tennessee, and Seattle, Washington,

where he talks about his beliefs and what he is doing about them. He also provides a booklet of supporting research he's gathered.

Keeping up and in touch

WebTV fits into Pollard's views as a tool for keeping up as well as keeping in touch. His 90 e-mail messages mostly come from two lists where people are tracking the Millennium bug and another concerned with survival and self-reliant living that has a Christian ethic.

On the 64 acres in southwest Kentucky that he now calls Success Ranch, purchased about five years ago, Pollard has built a 1,440-square-foot earth-sheltered house for himself and his wife. He also has recycled a 100-year-old two-room house and two outbuildings he found there. The old tin-roofed, post-and-beam house has become his office and a library for a growing collection of self-sufficiency reference books.

The property adjoins a 3,000-acre wildlife preserve and there is a small river through it with fish and beaver, he says. Pollard, at 61, has begun building a meat-and-milking herd starting with a few cows and pygmy goats. There'll be a chicken flock for more meat and eggs. And he has a vegetable and herb garden. There is a substantial wood lot and he has planted some acres in grain and other, what he calls, "practical" crops.

He's searching for the right pair of Belgian draft horses to buy and for horse-drawn implements. That is so he can reduce dependence on gasoline-powered equipment, he says.

Bought for convenience

"In my office I have WebTV and a computer. I had the computer before I got the WebTV. I got the WebTV for its convenience. And my wife can use it. She can do basically one thing with the computer and that is keep books,

but the Internet she does with the WebTV."

Pollard saw a way to make some money introducing others to WebTV. For him, selling comes easy. He has had decades of sales and marketing and people contact that began at age eight in his home town of Nashville, "knocking on doors and selling people greeting cards."

His background also includes being a pastor for several years in Kentucky, Tennessee, and south Florida.

"That was selling fire insurance," he reflects about his years in the ministry.

In Florida, he became involved in minority ministries in the inner city and as a Christian activist. That took him to the state capitol in Tallahassee where he put his powers of persuasion to work at the government level.

To sell WebTV to others, Pollard began by contacting a friend in Nashville who was a distributor for a Multi Level Marketing firm in California. This arrangement means he has no territorial sales limitations and no need to invest in and store any big inventory, he says.

Pollard introduces others to the WebTV system mainly from a booth at a few preparedness expositions around the country, through comparatively inexpensive advertising in community shopper newspapers and by word-of-mouth marketing. He hands out a home-made, computer-generated introduction, about 4 by 5-inches in size, that reads simply, "Surf the Net without a computer for less than \$150," and includes his voice and fax phone numbers and his company name—Success Ranch Marketing.

At the Expos

A preparedness show in Indianapolis, Indiana, is where *Backwoods Home Magazine* publisher Dave Duffy met Pollard.

"I sat down at his booth and used the remote and a keyboard to access my own Web page (www.backwoodshome.com) and sent my office an e-

mail," Duffy said. "I used the remote device to click between the Internet and regular TV. Once on the Internet, the commands were very user friendly; you can type using the remote or the faster keyboard accessory."

"One sale usually makes five more," Pollard observes.

A 1997 *Washington Post* newspaper article stated about 150,000 units had then been sold compared to the 15 million households it said contained an Internet-capable personal computer. WebTV claims approximately 400,000 subscribers today.

Retailers and the large chain computer and electronics stores don't push WebTV equipment because there isn't a lot of profit in it, he points out. A complete basic or "classic" WebTV system can cost under \$100 for the basic hardware. Then there is a monthly fee for Internet services.

Pollard describes his WebTV as much like a video cassette recorder in size. It comes with a wireless remote control. The WebTV box hooks to any television and to the nearest telephone service jack. A wireless remote keyboard at \$70 is an accessory. A fancier WebTV Plus receiver, for an additional couple of hundred dollars, adds more computer capability and more Internet bells and whistles. Both the basic unit or the upgraded version will also hook up to several kinds of popular computer printers. The printer is essential to retain any of what is captured from the Internet and displayed on the TV screen.

Many features

Both present WebTV models support the latest technology in e-mailing and real-time electronic "chat room" visits with others over the Internet. Both give the user on-screen program listings and guides for the TV shows, lockout features for the Internet and e-mail where children may be among the users and their use needs to be screened. There is even a phone call-waiting alerting interface feature that

will allow switching out of web travel to answer the phone, then will go back on line and pick up exactly where you left off.

Picture-within-a-picture is another WebTV feature. That allows watching a TV show and "surfing" the web at the same time. If TV programs or commercials display one of those "www-dot-whatever" Internet addresses for more product information, the WebTV user can just click the clicker and WebTV will take him or her to that site on the Internet to see what it is all about.

Favorite Internet locations and e-mail addresses can be saved, among other ways to personalize the system.

Phone hookups for WebTV can be either through an Internet Service Provider (ISP) account if the buyer already has one or direct from WebTV Networks, Inc. Adding WebTV to an existing ISP will cost another \$9.95 to \$14.95 a month. From WebTV direct, the service is \$19.95 to \$24.95 a month. An affiliation between MCI and WebTV Networks, Inc., is even cheaper with \$14.95 a month buying unlimited access to the web if you are already an MCI user.

Simplicity seems to remain a priority in all WebTV features. The units will hunt up a new access phone number automatically when you first plug it in after a move from a town to a new town.

Software upgrades that add features or fix problems also happen without any owner attention, although the latest one has a lot of people disappointed, according to Linda Jones. WebTV users, you see, have their own network on the web to share comments and complaints. There's a news group, as it is called, at "alt.webtv".

Sell them direct

As for selling the sets, Pollard says, "I play with it. I am fortunate in that I don't have to make a sale to eat. But if you wanted to work it you could make a living at it."

"It is like a lot of things out there. That's why I've enjoyed success in direct sales. Most of the things sold in direct sales are sold because they need to be demonstrated to be sold. It's not something you'll go in and pick up off the shelf. And because of the amount it sells for, most dealers like electronic stores are not going to push it when they can sell you a \$600 to \$2,000 computer or \$800 or more television set.

"And it is a relatively new concept even though it has been around a while," says Pollard.

There is no debating the fact that, for less than \$150, WebTV seems an easy and economical way to get up to speed on the Information highway. Δ



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